

ANGLIA RUSKIN UNIVERSITY

COMMUNITY PERCEPTIONS OF LOW LEVEL ANTI-
SOCIAL BEHAVIOUR BY YOUNG PEOPLE, AND
IMAGINING A SOLUTION: AN EXPLORATORY CASE
STUDY

ELAINE STATHAM

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I believe that when I embarked on my PhD studies I had a realistic expectation of the intellectual challenges ahead of me. On reflection, however, I underestimated the emotional roller-coaster I would experience. Fortunately, I had a group of people who supported me through the difficult times when my roller coaster reached a dip and were there to share my emotional highs.

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ANGLIA RUSKIN UNIVERSITY
ABSTRACT
FACULTY OF HEALTH, SOCIAL CARE AND EDUCATION
DOCTOR OF PHILOSOPHY

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October 2012

Critics of anti-social behaviour policy (ASB) introduced by New Labour Government since 1997 argue that it is overly punitive, and criminalises what is often sub-criminal or nuisance behaviour. Further criticism is that policy implementation through formal channels has led to the public increasingly relying on formal agencies in the governance of ASB, and becoming less willing to play an active role. The catalyst for my research was two Community Safety Teams' aim to reverse this trend.

I have developed an innovative approach in the form of a booklet (Let's Talk) based on the under-researched Imagined Intergroup Contact model associated with the Intergroup Contact Theory which underpins Intergenerational Practice. My thesis centres on the piloting of the booklet in two regions in England, and the proposition that 'Intergenerational approaches can be a useful way of understanding and addressing tensions associated with perceived anti-social behaviour by young people'.

Drawing broadly on a social constructionist paradigm (Burr, 1995), and using an inductive case study approach, both quantitative and qualitative data were collected via various research tools. The sample included local residents, representatives of community organisations and the Community Safety Teams (CST). Data were coded and analysed using NVivo and SPSS. Theoretical data analysis was underpinned by the Integrated Threat Theory and the Social Cognitive Theory. Compared with other theories associated with Intergenerational Practice, the Integrated Threat Theory gave a more comprehensive explanation for intergenerational tensions. SCT gave new insights into the concept of agency in relation to the governance of ASB.

My research identified anti-social behaviour that the CSTs felt did not warrant formal intervention, and the booklet received enthusiastic support from all parties consulted as an alternative, community-based approach. Reasons for a few individuals not wanting to adopt the booklet approach were identified; these included personal factors and social dynamics. My findings provided important knowledge for the future development and use of the booklet.

This thesis makes a significant contribution to knowledge. Firstly, it extends the theoretical explanation of intergenerational tensions, and adds insights into the concept of governance and the theoretical underpinnings of Intergenerational Practice. Secondly, it advances implications for practice in relation to fully exploring social dynamics other than intergenerational issues, taking account of potential multi-generational factors, and being aware that preparatory activities to strengthen self-efficacy may be required.

Key words: anti-social behaviour, governance, intergenerational practice, intergroup contact theory, imagined intergroup contact

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List of acronyms and abbreviations

ASB	Anti-social behaviour
BC	Borough Council
BCS	British Crime Survey
CIP	Centre for Intergenerational Practice
CDRP	Crime and Disorder Reduction Partnership
CBO	Criminal Behaviour Order
CPSO	Community Police Support Officer
CST	Community Safety Teams
DICT	Deficit of Intergroup Contact Theory
DCSF	Department for Children, Schools and Families
DP	Directions Power
IIC	Imagined Intergroup Contact
IP	Intergenerational Practice
ICT	Intergroup Contact Theory
IMD	Index of Multiple Deprivation
ITT	Integrated Threat Theory
LA	Local Authority
LLSOA	Lower Level Super Output Area
NWC	Neighbourhood Watch Co-ordinator
ONS	Office for National Statistics
RICT	Realistic Intergroup Conflict Theory
RNWC	Regional Neighbourhood Watch Co-ordinator
SCT	Social Cognitive Theory
SID	Social Identity Theory
SNT	Safer Neighbourhood Team
UREC	University Research Ethics Committee
THA	Teenagers hanging around
YP	Young people

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Chapter 1

Introduction

Background

The catalyst for the research underlying my thesis was a meeting with employees of a Borough Council (BC) in East Anglia to discuss the possibility of developing a response to the BC's problem of residents unduly complaining to the Community Safety Team (CST) about perceived anti-social behaviour (ASB) by young people (YP). Frequently the BC did not consider the behaviour serious enough to warrant formal intervention. Rather, it was often viewed as 'kids just being kids', or at worst low level ASB - such as kids playing football, skateboarding in the street, and gathering in a group in public places. A previous meeting, which I did not attend, had considered it an intergenerational problem and one capable of being resolved informally. Due to my academic interest in Intergenerational Practice (IP) I attended the second meeting at which a project plan was formulated.

IP is a relatively new field in the United Kingdom (UK), and draws significantly on practice and research from America and Canada. IP is underpinned by the Intergroup Contact Theory (ICT), usually associated originally with Allport's work in the 1950s, and a theory which continues to be researched and developed today. Hewstone and Swart as recently as 2011 argued that "it is high time that this body of work was acknowledged as a fully-fledged theory" (Hewstone and Swart, 2001, p.380). Relating ICT to intergenerational issues, the theory argues that bringing together members of two generations can reduce negative attitudes and stereotyping; through direct contact within a non-

competitive, collaborative environment positive outcomes can be achieved (Granville and Ellis, 1999; Statham, 2009). Intergenerational projects, it is also suggested, should be designed with clearly defined outcomes rather than being a by-product of work primarily designed for other purposes. Additionally, projects should preferably involve an ongoing process rather than one-off activities.

As a researcher I had relatively recently become aware of and interested in the development of IP. Whilst I considered there to be value in this field of work I also recognised some limitations which are set out in Moore and Statham (2006). The opportunity to work on a project which allowed me to explore IP further and within the context of addressing problems of teenage-related anti-social behaviour was an attractive proposition. I came to the research with the view that in some instances teenagers' behaviour could be unjustifiably classed by adults as anti-social. I believed that related projects principally focused on correcting teenage behaviour and rarely majored on addressing adult attitudes which were at times unnecessarily negative. Therefore, I was keen to explore an alternative approach; one that encouraged adults to take a different perspective and to interact positively with young people.

Going deeper into the BC's problem, the perception was that much intergenerational friction relating to YP's perceived ASB could be addressed by encouraging adults to take a different, more constructive perspective. The notion was that this would increase adults' empathy with YP, consequently reducing anxiety and increasing willingness to interact to reach amicable solutions. Anxiety was considered important on two counts. It prevented

adults initiating potentially constructive interaction, leading to individuals unduly relying on the Local Authority (LA) to act. Additionally, the BC felt that public reliance on formal control in managing ASB had been heightened by the government's various policy measures.

Framing an alternative approach using IP, my initial thoughts were that a project could be based on the direct contact model of ICT. However, research shows that issues such as anxiety can jeopardise direct contact (for example, Pettigrew and Tropp, 2006). My previous experience suggested that identifying and recruiting suitable and willing participants could inhibit intergenerational projects. I became aware of these obstacles when evaluating an intergenerational arts-based project between 2003-06. Recruitment was targeted at adults who had expressed animosity towards teenagers 'hanging around', and at 12-14 year olds identified as having been involved in ASB or at risk of doing so. Given the above criteria it was not surprising that recruitment was a major weakness; a fair assumption is that adults who perceived teenagers hanging around as a problem might have anxieties about interaction and were unlikely to welcome direct contact in a project. Similarly, working with adults might be an unattractive proposition to disaffected youth.

A relatively new development associated with the ICT is research into indirect forms of contact. Chapter 3 explores the various models more deeply, but briefly my project is based on the imagined intergroup contact model (IIC), a form of indirect contact drawing on both the ICT (Pettigrew, 2008a) and the Anxiety Uncertainty Management Theory (Gudykunst, 2004; Stephan and Finlay, 1999; Stephan, Stephan and Gudykunst, 1999). In the IIC model,

individuals are given a simulated scenario in which they imagine they meet and converse with someone from a social group about which the individual has negative perceptions. Through learning more about this person and having a positive experience through this imagined encounter, research has shown that negative stereotyping can reduce.

The BC and local Regional Development Agency provided funding for a project to develop, produce and implement a booklet, a copy of which is included as Appendix 1. It built on the IIC model by including visual content (text and photographs) to aid imagining interaction. Subsequently, an East Midlands Safer Neighbourhood Team (SNT) participated and funded piloting the booklet locally. The funders' role is discussed in Chapter 4.

The 'Let's Talk' booklet consists of two parts. The first part encourages adults to view YP's 'problem' behaviour from a different perspective, in turn encouraging better understanding. Secondly, where behaviour occurs that the BC does not consider justifies formal intervention, adults will feel better equipped to talk with the YP to effect an amicable solution. Producing the booklet involved an iterative process of drafting and redrafting in a series of workshops comprising representatives from different sectors of the community. Throughout its development the Let's Talk booklet generally received significant support. When I introduced it to the East Midlands SNT and local residents it had been through the design stage. The SNT endorsed the booklet's content, although of course changes were made to contact details.

An underlying concept informing my overall approach and the booklet's design was tolerance. Hancock and Matthews (2001) provide a useful initial working definition of the concept, namely "the deliberate choice not to interfere with conduct or beliefs of which one disapproves" (p.99). Kearns and Bannister (2009) classified a non-interventionist approach in a situation of which one disapproves as 'pure' or 'static' tolerance. They then suggest strategies to improve one's tolerance threshold by utilising 'dynamic' responses. They characterise a psychological response as "coaching ourselves to be less irritated or angered by [disapproved of] conduct" (Kearns and Bannister, 2009, p.138). Going further, and both modifying one's degree of tolerance and seeking to change some of the other party's behaviour, they describe 'ameliorative co-existence' as choosing to "willingly co-exist with the unfavoured conduct whilst at the same time attempting to moderate the expectations and behaviours of both the 'perpetrators' and ourselves so that we 'get along' better" (Kearns and Bannister, 2009, p.138). These two definitions best describe the type of tolerance the booklet seeks to generate.

The booklet is accordingly a potential intervention in the issue of young people's low level ASB, drawing directly on community perceptions and linking into intergenerational practice. To my knowledge this represents an innovative response to tackling the perceived problem of 'teenagers hanging around' (THA), a term used in the British Crime Survey (BCS) which I will discuss later. Throughout my research I have continued to search for comparable practical tools, but the closest I have found are LA web-pages with their definition of ASB generally, and what victims should do prior to contacting the LA. The dearth of practical information available to the public was highlighted by Statham (2009).

Pettigrew, Tropp, Wagner and Christ, as recently as 2011 in referring to the different models of contact argued that “intergroup contact theory must be expanded to include how to bring past adversaries together in optimal contact situations” (Pettigrew, Tropp, Wagner and Christ, 2011, p.278). My study contributes to building such new knowledge, providing new knowledge in particular on the little studied imagined intergroup contact model, and on Stephan and Renfro’s (2002) model of the Integrated Threat Theory (ITT). Additionally, it provides new insights into the concept of governance from the perspectives of both residents and LA personnel, derived from a social-psychological rather than sociological perspective, drawing on Bandura’s work on social cognitive theory (for example, Bandura, 1998, 2001).

Research Aims and Propositions

My research focuses specifically on piloting the implementation of the booklet described above. My research aims are to identify and provide explanations for:

- a sample situation in which using the booklet might be appropriate;
- factors relevant to its potential for achieving successful outcomes; and
- issues pertinent to its ongoing development and use.

This thesis does not look critically at the booklet’s content or any change in individuals’ levels of empathy, anxiety, and tolerance resulting from the booklet’s use.

The research adopts an inductive approach, broadly situated within a social constructionist paradigm. Rather than testing a hypothesis, my research explores propositions. The **central proposition** is that:

Intergenerational approaches can be a useful way of understanding and addressing tensions associated with perceived anti-social behaviour by YP.

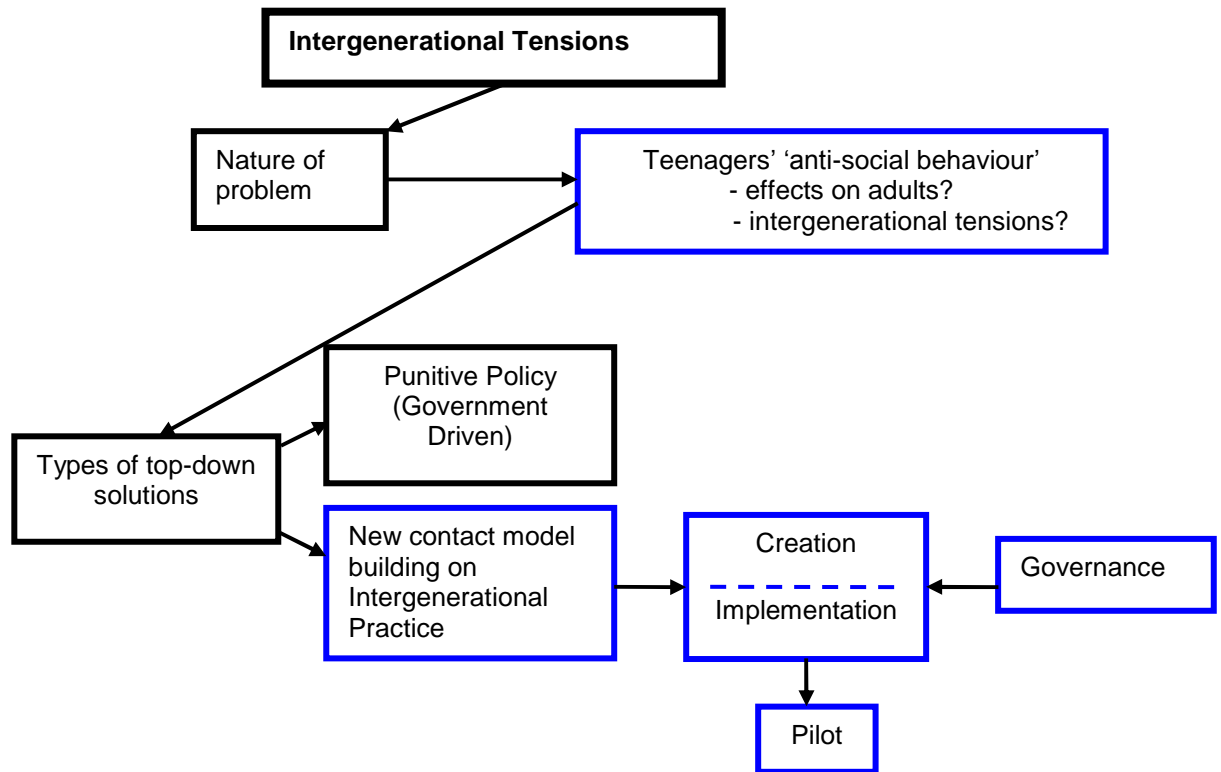
Derived from this are **three sub-propositions**:

1. Residents' perceptions of youth-related anti-social behaviour are influenced by a number of factors, including government policy, local context and individuals' characteristics.
2. Theories associated with intergenerational practice can be used to explain some of the issues associated with perceived low level youth-related ASB.
3. A booklet can be an effective medium for influencing adults' perceptions of youth-related activity, and assisting individuals and communities to deal with ASB.

Outline of the Thesis

From my original discussions with the BC I formulated a conceptual framework (Figure 1.1) which informed my initial literature review and subsequent research methodology. The main concepts emerging were the social construction of teenagers, anti-social behaviour and the associated concept of 'teenagers hanging around', its governance, and Intergenerational Practice. Chapters 2 and 3 discuss literature relating to the conceptual framework.

Figure 1.1: Conceptual Framework



My literature review process was informed by Fink (2007), and Machi and McEvoy (2009) who provide advice on searching for literature using key search terms and for looking critically at material to judge its appropriateness and merits. I accessed Anglia Ruskin University's library catalogue, electronic databases, and government and professional bodies' websites. Key terms such as 'anti-social behaviour', 'teenagers hanging around/about', 'youth', 'governance', 'governmentality', 'intergenerational relations', 'group conflict' were used. I restricted my search of ASB-related government policy to the UK; similarly, much of the literature on ASB and THA was UK-focused. For 'intergenerational relations', given the dearth of UK literature, I included overseas sources, with American and Canadian journals proving a useful resource. Chapter 2 reviews the literature on ASB and THA including

definitions, national statistical evidence of people's perceptions of the problems' nature and causes, and their responses. I also explore the literature on government policy towards ASB, and associated criticism. The literature on governance and local level policy implementation was similarly important, and is also discussed in Chapter 2.

In Chapter 3, the literature on which I first focus relates to Intergenerational Practice, helping to further formalise my knowledge of IP's theoretical underpinnings. Three theories used in IP to explain intergenerational tensions are discussed. Additionally I identify a fourth theory, Integrated Threat Theory, which to my knowledge has not been used in IP, but merits further exploration. To break down intergenerational tensions, IP draws on the ICT which includes different models of intergenerational contact, outlined in Chapter 3. As already stated, the model that relates best to my booklet is Imagined Intergroup Contact. Literature suggests that this model is in the early stages of development; research is limited regarding both methods used (mainly experimental) and findings disseminated. Also, whilst research exists on the IIC model's effectiveness in tackling, for example, racial issues and homophobia, none has been found on ASB-related issues. A strength of my research is building new knowledge on using the IIC model in a naturalistic setting and for a different social problem.

Given that the booklet encourages the use of informal rather than formal control, I return in Chapter 3 to the literature on governance, specifically to the strengths and weaknesses of informal control policies. Encouragingly there

was significant support for informal control at local level, though constraints were identified, notably lack of community cohesion.

Chapter 4 outlines the methodology used, namely a case study approach with the booklet being the central phenomenon, bounded geographically within four locations. My intention was to gain knowledge to inform the booklet's implementation and further contribute to practice in line with the research aims outlined on page 1. Research methods are discussed in detail in Chapter 4. Briefly, although a small amount of quantitative data were collected, qualitative data provides the backbone to my research. Data were collected from participants representing different sections of the community, including residents, representatives of local organisations in four different locations (two in East Anglia and two in the East Midlands) and relevant employees of the two associated LAs. I had considered collecting data from YP, whose views had been collected and analysed during the booklet's creation. Doing so had however contributed to time delays because the University Research Ethics Committee (UREC) had supported advice given to me that collection of data must be by a Youth or Social Worker, which in practice had proved difficult. At the booklet's piloting stage, after carefully considering that the booklet was designed to be used by adults rather than by YP, I decided to limit data collection to adults.

Chapters 5, 6, and 7 cover the data collected and my coding. In line with the social constructionist approach and case study method adopted, data collection initially focused on contextualising the research. It was important to gain background knowledge on the local situations only briefly explained by the

Borough Council and Safer Neighbourhood Team. I was mindful of Bannister's and Kearns' (2009) comment that "policy ... needs to understand what the drivers of our (in)tolerance are in the context in question, in order to work out how to intervene so as to shift our threshold of tolerance up or down" (p.183).

Chapter 5 concentrates on data relating to adults' perceptions of THA. Interestingly, various types of YP's behaviour were labelled as ASB. Some were relatively serious, including property damage and vandalism; other behaviour, similar to the BC's and SNT's observations, was either 'kids being kids' or at worst low level ASB. Perceptions also varied in relation to how different people rated the severity of a particular behaviour. For example, football was frequently cited; for some people it was not a problem, whereas others deemed it ASB and warranting LA intervention.

Chapter 6 explores data on what adults consider causes ASB, their responses (emotional and practical) to experiencing it, and their responses to encountering YP in public places more generally. Causes generally cited were either personal to the young person and their family background such as low moral values, or structural factors such as poor discipline in schools or insufficient police presence. Only a few participants, generally having positive views of YP, thought that adults' intolerance contributed to the problem. The Integrated Threat Theory provided a strong theoretical framework here.

The booklet's central tenet is that adults should attempt to deal personally with low level ASB. However, according to the LAs involved, members of the public were frequently reticent. It was important to explore these issues and their

potential impact on the booklet's eventual implementation; accordingly I collected relevant data from residents, workshop participants and the SNT. Interestingly the SNT expressed a strong wish to maintain control of the booklet and of implementation, and governance. These issues are covered in Chapter 7.

At this point in my research, coding became more theoretical. In addition to the ITT, I found the Social Cognitive Theory a valuable theoretical framework against which to consider my data. I found no literature to suggest previous such use of the SCT, so my research extends current knowledge on governance of ASB.

Chapter 8, my final findings chapter, focuses on piloting the booklet in Location KL, where YP playing football in a residential area was an issue. I followed up with telephone interviews to gain an update on the situation and record reasons for a reported improvement. As in Chapter 7, the SCT provided an appropriate theoretical framework to analyse governance-related data. Also, during the interviews residents' views on the booklet were canvassed. Generally, feedback was favourable; reluctance to use the booklet was attributed to personal factors and/or social dynamics.

For ease of reference, Table 1.1 summarises the development of the research which resulted in the four candidate locations being reduced to one suitable location in which to pilot the booklet (Location KL).

Table 1.1: Potential use of the Let's Talk booklet as an intervention – comparison across case study locations.

Note: 'Yes' and 'No' in Stages 1, 2 and 4 represent assessment of the booklet's suitability at that stage of research.

Stages	Locations			
	E	WW	KL	WC
1. Initial assessment of suitability of booklet based on LA/SNT views, and on preliminary background research.	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
2. Re-assessment following analysis of data gathered from questionnaires, focus groups and workshops.	No	No	Yes	No
	Specific problem not identified against which to pilot booklet.		SNT identified specific problem against which to pilot booklet.	SNT considered problem identified as too severe against which to pilot booklet.
3. Piloting carried out	No	No	Yes	No
4. Assessment of suitability after piloting.	N/A	N/A	Yes	N/A
			Subject to further development.	

I begin Chapter 9, Discussions of Findings, with the construction of youth-related ASB, including widely divergent views as to what was considered ASB and its degree of severity, together with the effect on these perceptions of factors such as inter-personal relationships and interaction. Government policy did not however emerge as key influencers of perceptions.

I show how four theories - realistic intergroup conflict theory (RICT), social identity theory (SIT), deficit of intergenerational contact theory (DICT) and social identity theory (SIT) - explain to an extent the causes of intergenerational tensions. In reviewing the situation in Location KL the antecedents to threat proposed by the Integrated Threat Theory provided an alternative and very effective theoretical framework, identifying issues such as social dominance, authoritarianism, lack of contact and a variety of social and situational factors, together with resulting psychological and behavioural reactions. I consider that the ITT provides the richest and most comprehensive explanation of intergenerational tensions described in my research data. These findings constitute new knowledge pertinent to the development of IP.

Additionally, relating to governance, a social psychological perspective using the Social Cognitive Theory framework gave me rich insights into issues of agency including residents' reluctance to become involved in addressing ASB, and how local residents and the local authorities conceptualise governance. I examine the authorities' and residents' views on using the booklet, positive in both cases, including discussion of how my work extends the Imagined Intergroup Contact. This is followed by discussion of residents' contradictory disinclination to become involved in practice, for which the SCT and related concept of self-efficacy provide a fitting theoretical explanation, and which might be overcome by introducing workshops to improve self-efficacy.

My concluding chapter demonstrates the originality of my work including an innovative approach to addressing low level youth-related ASB and adopting a social psychological approach as the perspective through which to undertake

ASB research. I go on to review the extent to which my research findings support my propositions, and to analyse the reasons for divergences, followed by discussion of how my findings relate to existing research. My contribution to knowledge includes using the Social Cognitive Theory as a tool in ASB research, piloting research into Imagined Intergroup Contact model in a natural setting using a story-telling approach, and demonstrating the effectiveness of Integrated Threat Theory as a theoretical framework relevant to the study of youth-related ASB issues. I demonstrate that youth-related ASB problems cannot necessarily be fully explained by focusing on intergenerational issues, and that care must be taken to identify any multilateral intergroup issues that may co-exist with bilateral ones.

My recommendations for further research include a full evaluation of the booklet's effectiveness, using the booklet to further explore Social Contact Theory as a theoretical framework for governance issues, using ITT to research intergenerational tensions, and assessing YP's views of perceived ASB and of the potential use of the booklet with their age group. Research in the Imagined Intergroup Contact field into using a booklet of this type as a precursor to direct contact is also called for.

Turning to strengths and limitations of my research, I assess the main limitation to be the lack of a full evaluation, and not collecting data directly from parents of the 'problem' children. Its strengths include its originality, building on existing research by pioneering the use of Imagined Intergroup Contact model, Social Cognitive Theory and Integrated Threat Theory as theoretical frameworks in the fields of intergenerational and ASB-related research thereby creating new

knowledge relevant to both theory and practice, and highlighting a number of subjects for further research.

My overall conclusion is that my study does fulfil its research aim, and provides both the justification and motivation for undertaking further related research, which I am keen to do.

Chapter 2

'Teenagers Hanging Around' as Anti-Social Behaviour: the problem and government policy responses

In this chapter and Chapter 3 I review the literature relating to the concepts shown in Figure 1.2. Chapter 2 reviews literature on ASB and THA; how they are defined, and the national statistical evidence of people's perceptions of the nature and causes of the problem, and their responses to it. I also review government policy on tackling ASB, and associated criticism. Exploring the literature on governance was also important regarding local level policy implementation.

Anti-Social Behaviour: the problem of definition

Prior to 1997, whilst in opposition, the New Labour party identified ASB as a problem facing some communities, and as part of their electoral campaign in 1997 pledged to prioritise its reduction (Parr, 2009). Once in power Tony Blair and his government "propelled the issue to the top of the UK's political agenda" (Parr, 2009, p.363) even though there was a dearth of empirical, quantified evidence on the problem to support this response (Prior, 2009). Whilst appealing to the electorate was one reason given for the focus on ASB, other factors have been identified as drivers.

Firstly, government members expressed behavioural concerns about some individuals and families living in social housing and hard-pressed areas; perpetrators considered 'hard to manage' and their disruptive behaviour made other residents fearful and affected their quality of life. Therefore, within their

capacity as social landlords, LAs were canvassing the government for new powers to tackle the problem behaviour (Burney, 2009).

Secondly, as Home Secretary, Jack Straw supported the emphasis given to tackling anti-social behaviour because he was concerned about the adverse effect it had on communities, but also for personal reasons. Following his parents' divorce, as a boy, he had relocated to a council estate with his mother. As a privately educated boy he was singled out by some locals, and he and his mother were harassed by neighbours resulting in an unpleasant court case (Burney, 2009, p.20).

A third factor resulted from a visit by Tony Blair and Jack Straw to New York to learn about the approach adopted there. Under Mayor Giuliani, Chief of Police Will Bratton had imposed a zero tolerance response to nuisance and offensive behaviour such as aggressive begging, graffiti, and public drunkenness (Muncie, 2004), based on the broken window theory of Wilson and Kelling (1982 cited in Burney, 2009). Broadly speaking the theory suggests that if minor acts of deviance are left unchecked within a community this leads to an escalation of unacceptable behaviour and crime. Equally, if individuals' standards of care and behaviour drop and are not addressed a downward spiral of conduct will be perpetuated:

"We suggest that 'untended' behaviour also leads to the breakdown of community controls. A stable neighbourhood of families who care for their homes, mind each other's children, and confidently frown on unwanted intruders can change, in a few years or even a few months, to an inhospitable and frightening jungle. A piece of property is abandoned, weeds grow up, and children, emboldened, become more rowdy". (Wilson and Kelling, 1982 cited in Burney, 2009, p.26)

Burney (2009) also cites actuarial criminology as an approach to crime prevention and community safety. Developed in the 1990s, its focus is on analysing the occurrence of offences in order to identify and prioritise risks, then introducing crime prevention measures. The focus is on reducing the risk of crime occurring, and reducing fear of crime, rather than apprehending offenders. As regards governance, it was generally recognised that a centralised approach to policy making and delivery had not been sufficiently effective; accordingly it was suggested that responsibility should be devolved to LAs, a wider range of local agencies and institutions, and citizens (Garland, 1997).

ASB was defined in the Crime and Disorder Act 1998 as “Acting in a manner that caused or was likely to cause harassment, alarm or distress to one or more persons not of the same household as perpetrator” (Home Office, 2003a, p.5; 2004, p.3).

This is recognised as being a very broad definition, as demonstrated by Hazel Blears when Minister of State in the Home Office; when asked to clarify what constituted anti-social behaviour she stated that “it means whatever the victim says it means” (cited in Chakrabarti and Russell, 2008, p.313).

The Home Office definition has been frequently criticised for its subjectivity – what one person interprets as unacceptable behaviour, another may perceive the reverse. Also, because of its vagueness, it has been criticised for blurring the boundaries between ‘disorder’, ‘crime’ and anti-social behaviour, and does

not facilitate specificity and measurability (Brown, 2004; Burney, 2002, 2005; Goldsmith, 2008; Jacobson, Millie and Hough, 2008; Matthews and Briggs, 2008; Prior, 2009; Squires and Stephen, 2005, Squires, 2006).

Blears, however, defended the vagueness of the definition by stating:

“The definition is broad and allows for a range of activities to be included within it. However, if we were to strictly define anti-social behaviour by certain types of behaviour or break it down into specific categories and sub-categories we would risk excluding some types of behaviour which are problematic or including others which may not be”. (Blears cited in Prior, 2009, p.10)

Millie, Jacobson, Hough and Paraskevopoulou (2005) emphasise in the debate notions of perception and intention:

“ASB is not always intentional and malicious, and often reflects ignorance, carelessness or thoughtlessness. Moreover, what one individual may deem to be ASB, another may regard as entirely reasonable behaviour: for example, with respect to noise or rowdy behaviour, different individuals or groups have different levels of tolerance”. (Millie, Jacobson, Hough, and Paraskevopoulou, 2005, p.54)

Flint (2002) contributes to this line of discussion by suggesting that interpretations of ASB result from “conflicting perceptions of behaviour between residents” (p.628).

The Home Office produced a typology of behaviours constituting anti-social behaviour, the main headings being: ‘misuse of public space’, ‘disregard for community/personal well-being’, ‘acts directed at people’, and ‘environmental damage’ (Home Office, 2004a, p.4). However, the typology is confusing because it includes both non-criminal and criminal acts; in fact one of the sub-headings used is ‘criminal damage/vandalism’. Moore (2010) argues that this

inappropriately conflates anti-social behaviour and crime as a 'single problem' that can be addressed with the same policy responses. He argues "issues of anti-social behaviour and crime need to be disaggregated and reconceptualised as distinct social problems" (Moore, 2010, p.2). I agree with these sentiments but would argue that similarly policy response needs to make a distinction between low and high level ASB, as discussed further below.

It is clear that ASB is not easily defined, and to a large extent is open to individuals' subjective interpretation. As a working definition of ASB, Millie (2007) suggested that the term should be limited to:

"[B]ehaviour that requires intervention from the relevant authorities, but where criminal prosecution may be inappropriate because the behaviour is not prohibited by criminal law, or in isolation is only a relatively minor criminal offence. The defining feature that made behaviour anti-social was its **cumulative impact** [my emphasis] on individuals or groups. Thus, something that on its own is annoying or perhaps upsetting (for instance, someone shouting abuse across the street) becomes ASB if this is a **repeated occurrence** [my emphasis], especially if aimed at a particular individual or group". (Millie, 2007, p.614)

From the above quote Millie (2007) developed a short, three-strand typology of anti-social behaviour – firstly, 'interpersonal or malicious ASB' against individuals, groups or organisations; secondly, 'environmental ASB' examples of which were 'noise nuisance, graffiti or fly-tipping'; and thirdly, 'ASB restricting access to public spaces', such as intimidation by groups and alcohol and drug use in public spaces.

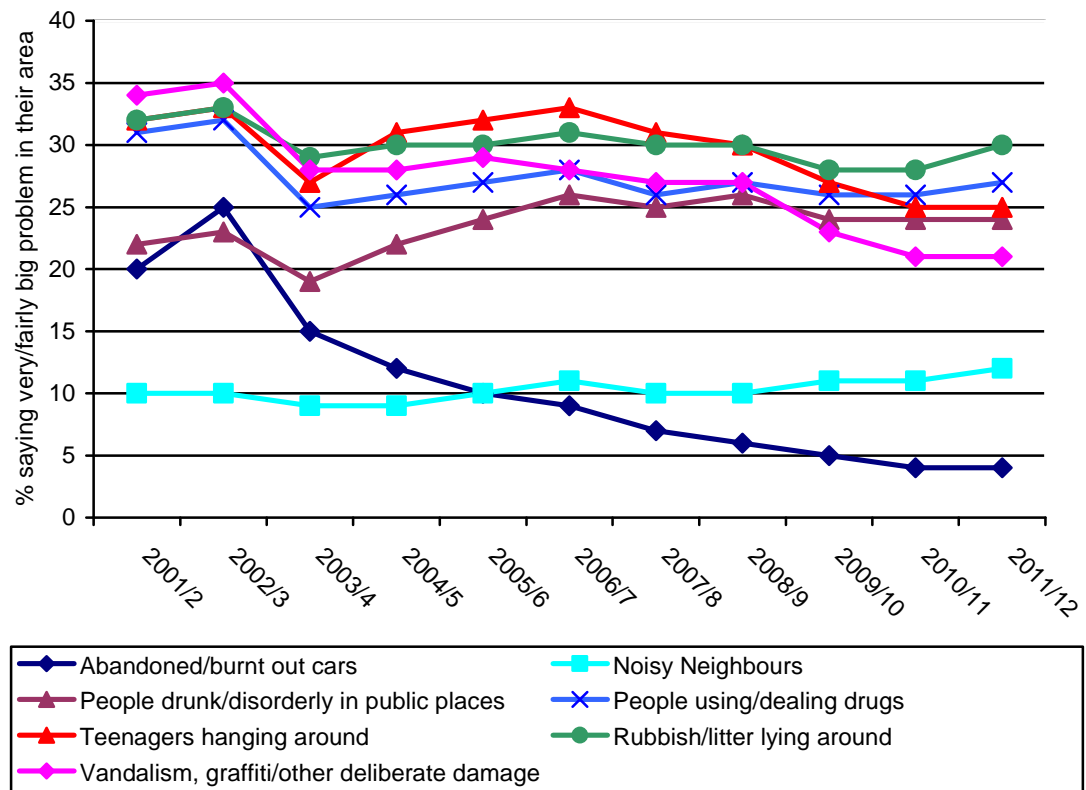
Disaggregating ASB into different types of behaviour is important to my research, which focuses on 'low level' ASB. This I define as 'nuisance behaviour which the relevant authorities consider capable of being dealt with by

the individuals or communities affected'; such as the examples given on page 1. In contrast, 'high level' ASB could include behaviour that resulted in physical injury or property damage. Drawing on a social constructionist paradigm, and given the subjectivity of defining the concept and the fact that my research centres on identifying and potentially modifying the perceptions of individuals, exploring what residents construct as ASB was an important part of my research design.

Perceptions of ASB - general discussion

To gauge the scale of ASB nationally, the Home Office/Office for National Statistics, in annual crime surveys, ask respondents to what extent they perceived ASB a very big problem, fairly big problem, minor problem, or not a problem. Responses to this question were asked against the seven indicators featured in graph 2.1 below. Although the percentage perceiving each type of behaviour to be a problem differed, the graph shows five out of seven of the indicators followed a similar pattern year on year with a sharp drop occurring in 2003-4.

Graph 2.1: Indicators of Anti-Social Behaviour



Source: ONS, 2012 (online).

Overall, the levels of perceptions of ASB varied considerably according to different demographic and socio-economic factors, most notably between area based characteristics. For example, using ACORN (A Classification of Residential Neighbourhoods) to identify the “social environment in which households are located” (Kershaw, Nicholas and Walker, 2008, p.183), perceptions of the scale of the problem varied significantly between the ‘Hard Pressed’ and ‘Wealthy Achievers’. Thirty percent in the Hard Pressed group compared with 6% of the Wealthy Achievers group perceived there to be high levels of ASB. Similarly there was a clear distinction between those living in social rented, privately rented and owner occupied accommodation; (30%, 18%

and 13% respectively). In terms of personal characteristics, perceptions of ASB varied according to age. The age group most likely to perceive ASB as a very/fairly big problem was 16-24 year olds; within this group there was a slight variation according to gender. For males the percentage was 21% and for females it was 26%. Within the 75 years and over age group, regardless of gender, only 4% perceived high levels of ASB. Perhaps not surprisingly, a higher percentage of individuals who had been a victim or witness of crime during the last 12 months had high levels of perceived ASB than those who had not: 37% and 9% respectively (Moley, 2008). Of the indicators of perceived ASB included in Graph 2.1 above, of most interest here is 'teenagers hanging around'. A more detailed discussion follows later in this chapter, but first it is important to consider the concept of 'teenager'.

Conceptualising 'Teenager'

In Western societies the terms 'youth', 'teenager' and 'adolescent' are used to describe the period of life between childhood and adulthood. At the start of the 1900s Hall used 'adolescence' to represent the period in a human's life when physiological and bodily development occurred. He also argued that the period of development coincided with a phase of personal social change characterised by storm and stress. In other words, a period when YP grapple with hormonal changes, want to develop their own identity, and strive for independence; wanting to rely less on their parents and being influenced more by their peers (Kehily, 2007). I return to these issues later in this chapter.

Perhaps the simplest way to think of 'youth', 'teenagers' and 'adolescents' is within the specific age range of teenage years – 13-19 years. However, this is

too simplistic as it does not take into account social context. As Muncie (2004) argued:

“There are no precise moments that mark when childhood ends and adulthood begins. Does youth begin at the age of 10 when we can be held responsible for criminal behaviour? Does it start at 16 when we can leave school? And does it only end at the age of 26 when we can claim the full rate of housing benefit?” (Muncie, 2004, p.41)

Aries (1962) argued that childhood did not start to exist as a concept until the 16th and 17th centuries. Anderson, Kinsey, Loader and Smith (1994) stated that anthropological studies exist that highlight the different construction given to the concept of youth by different countries, cultures, and eras. For example, within the Western culture, in medieval times the notion of childhood and youth did not exist and children aged seven were weaned off infancy into the adult world, participating in society as small adults (Anderson, Kinsey, Loader and Smith, 1994). It is argued that in Europe and North America the advent of industrialisation, tighter regulation of working conditions associated with child labour, and wider access to education gave rise to a distinction being made between adults and children (Kehily, 2007). What is meant by ‘teenagers’ in the context of my research is explained in Chapter 4.

Media Influence on Adult Perceptions

Many authors (for example, France, 2007; Hendrick cited in James and Prout 1997; Muncie, 2004; Osgerby, 1998; Pearson in Millie, 2009; Roche, Tucker, Thomson and Flynn, 2004) have recognised the long history of adults’ framing of YP as a cause of concern. Cohen (1973) in his work on intergroup rivalry between mods and rockers in the 1960s argued that media discourse and coverage of the issue helped to generate what he termed the ‘moral panic’

about YP's behaviour. Youth sub-cultures, such as mods and rockers, skinheads, and punks, and more recently hoodies have continued to be the subject of negative media attention which has had the effect of stigmatising and stereotyping youths who choose particular fashions and styles (Garratt, 2004). Following on from Cohen's work, Pearson in his work into the urban riots in 1981 argued that moral panics associated with YP's behaviour appear to emerge every twenty years. "Pearson indicates that a new moral panic commonly repeats the themes of previous moral panics. Just when the panic is fading from popular memory, it re-emerges in a similar form to be visited upon the next generation of young people" (Kehily, 2007, p.20).

The grouping of youths in public places as a safety strategy rarely gets publicised. Matthews and Limb (1999) argue that the media are more likely to report negatively on teenagers hanging around. Margo, Dixon, Pearce and Reed, (2006, p.14) argue that the public discourse which stereotypes youth as troublesome is reinforced by the media use of phrases such as 'ASBO youth', 'hoodies' and 'yobs'.

A Mori poll (Ipsos Mori, 2006 online) investigated the representation of YP in the UK press by scrutinising seventeen newspapers, including national tabloids, broadsheets and local publications, over one week in August. This replicated a similar exercise during the same week the previous year, compared with which the percentage of 'neutral' representations (neither negative nor positive) had increased from 15% to 30%. However, articles portraying youth in a positive light had reduced by 2%, to 12%. Whilst the percentage of stories likely to be perceived negatively had decreased, over half (57%) had a negative slant.

It was found in the 2005 period that 40% of stories about YP focused on violence, crime and anti-social behaviour. In contrast, stories representing YP's lifestyle and achievements accounted for 6% and 6% respectively. Perhaps the public are made less aware of the fact that, according to a report by the Institute for Volunteering Research (2001 online), a significant percentage of 16-24year olds are community-minded and undertake voluntary work (40% undertake formal voluntary work and 73% informal). These statistics put them, at least, on a par with adult volunteering numbers.

It could be argued therefore that media coverage is thus one of the factors that have socially constructed a negative interpretation of youth, and helps to contextualise why some adults have negative perceptions of teenagers (Cohen, 1973; Garratt, 2004; Matthews and Limb, 1999).

Government Policy on Adult Perceptions

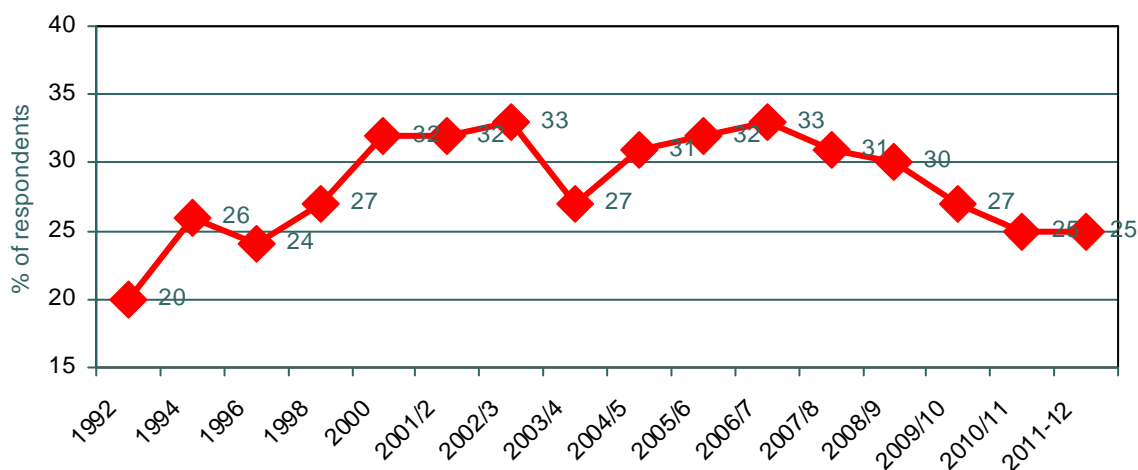
The discourse around YP as 'yobs' and New Labour's focus on punitive policy to tackle THA did little to prevent negative perceptions of YP, as discussed later. Hughes (2011) argues that government policy centred on ASB frames YP as a risk to communities and demonises them. Burney (2005) goes so far as to say that government focus on ASB has "become a convenient peg on which to hang general prejudice about YP and their activities" (p.67). Margo, Dixon, Pearce and Reed (2006) argue that government discourse around youth being a problem and having no moral values results in "a growing belief that in the UK we are facing a crisis of youth" (p.1).

Teenagers Hanging Around – Statistical Analysis

Whilst Prior (2009) provides various criticisms of the government's measurement of ASB, the annual BCS later renamed the Crime Survey for England and Wales (CSEW) (ONS, 2012), is generally accepted as the official source of data. I have drawn on these publications to build a picture of adults' perceptions of THA as a problem nationally and to position my research within a broader context.

Whilst not all adults see the use of public space by some teenagers as a problem, statistics suggest that a not insignificant percentage do perceive it as such. Indeed, since 1992 THA has ranked amongst the highest concerns; Graph 2.2 shows that the percentage of adults perceiving THA as a very big/fairly big problem increased steadily up to 2002/3. Inexplicably there was a significant drop in 2003/4; the percentage then rose again and stayed in the low 30s until 2008/9; subsequently there was an overall drop of 5 percentage points between 2009 and 2012. In the early stages of my research in 2005-6 the percentage was relatively high at 32.5%. During later fieldwork in Locations KL and WC, there was a three year decline to 27% (Innes, 2011).

Graph 2.2: Teenagers hanging around – perceived by adults as a very big/fairly big problem



Source: ONS, 2012 (online).

Out of the seven indicators of ASB used in the BSC and CSEW (Innes, 2011, p.95) listed in Graph 2.1, during the period 2001/2 to 2007/8, THA consistently ranked the first or second of the top three important issues identified as a very big/fairly big problem. Such a perception can negatively impact on individual's quality of life, even when threat is based on negative stereotyping of teenagers instead of personal experience. Table 2.1 categorises in more detail the types of behaviour associated with THA, according to the BSC.

Table 2.1: Nature of behaviours experienced in incidents of young people hanging around in the local area (2004-05 and 2008-09).

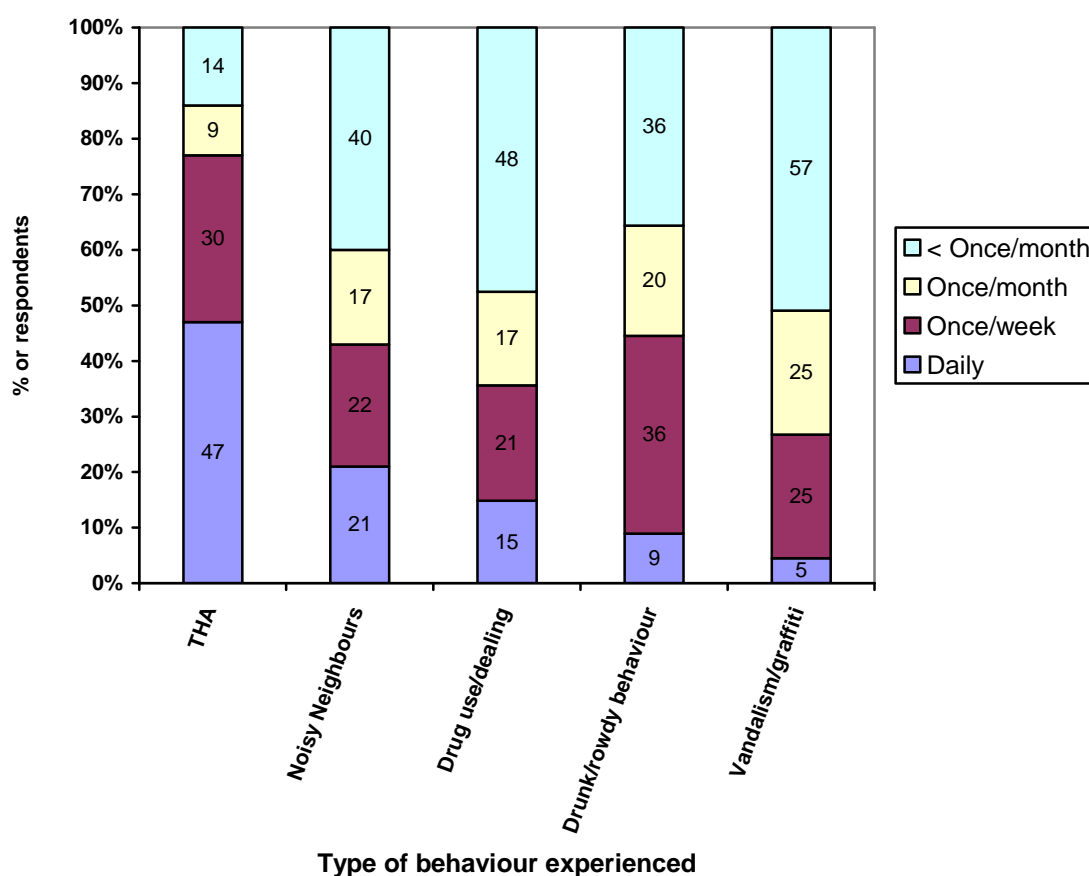
Types of Experience	% who experienced this behaviour	
	2004-05 ⁽¹⁾	2008-09 ⁽²⁾
Swearing/using bad language	70	80
Just being a general nuisance	66	72
Being loud, rowdy or noisy	66	78
Drinking alcohol	53	77
Littering (eg splitting gum on the street)	45	63
Blocking pavement	42	52
Being abusive/harassing or insulting people	35	50
Blocking the entrance to shops	29	34
Generally intimidating or threatening people	26	36
Taking drugs	22	37
Fighting with each other	22	38
Writing graffiti	22	27
Damaging property or cars	19	33
Carrying knives	0	12
Physically assaulting people	5	11
Mugging or robbing people	3	10
Other behaviour	1	2

Source: (1) Upson, 2006, p.47; (2) Parfremment-Hopkins and Hall, 2009, p.32.

At the commencement of my research 65% of BCS respondents had experienced THA on their local streets (Upson, 2006). Of this 65%, forty-seven percent thought this represented a problem. This equates to 31% of all respondents perceiving THA as a problem. The corollary is that over half those experiencing THA (53%) did not perceive it as a problem. The analysis does not indicate what underlies this difference in perception. For example, whether those not perceiving a problem had experienced less severe behaviour or whether all had experienced broadly similar behaviour but some were simply less worried by it (Upson, 2006).

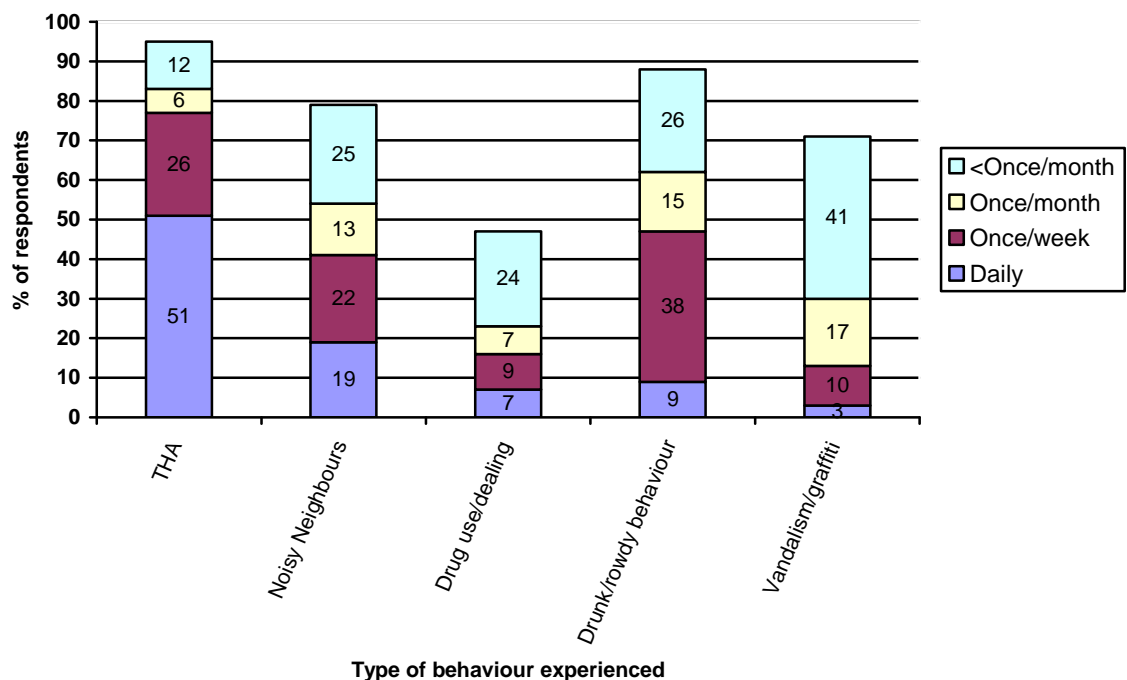
Of respondents experiencing ASB linked to THA, in 2004/05, 47% reported experiencing such behaviour daily (Upson, 2006); this increased to 51% in the 2007/8 survey (Flatley, Moley and Hoare, 2008). These percentages are extremely high when compared with other main types of ASB (see Graph 2.3a and Graph 2.3b), and also link back to the point made by Millie (2007) that the cumulative impact of a recurring activity defines behaviour as anti-social.

Graph 2.3a: Frequency of experience of anti-social behaviour (2004-05)



Source: Upson (2006, p.11)

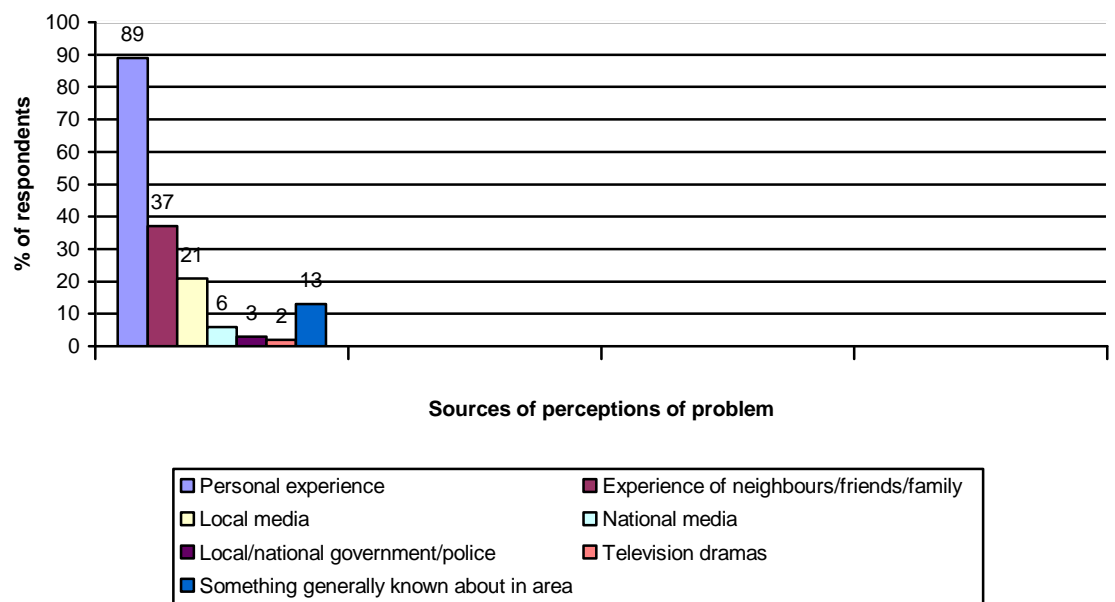
Graph 2.3b: Frequency of experience of anti-social behaviour (2007-08)



Source: Flatley, Moley and Hoare (2008)

In recent BCS and CSEW reports (for example Parfremment-Hopkins and Green, 2010, and ONS, 2012 respectively) data were included which analysed high levels of perceived anti-social behaviour against personal characteristics. These findings gave limited insights relevant to my research as they related to ASB generally. In contrast the BCS for 2004-05 provided data specific to ‘the sources of perceptions of teenagers hanging around as a problem’ (Upson, 2006). Scrutiny of these data shows that in 89% of cases personal experience was a factor. In some cases there was more than one cause; of significance, 37% cited the experience of known others, and 21% local media coverage (Upson, 2006, p.14 and p.46).

Graph 2.4: Sources of perceptions of problems with young people hanging around



The same dataset suggested that the negative impact of THA on respondents' quality of life was significant. Of those considering THA a very or fairly big problem, 62% felt it had a medium to high impact (41% and 21% respectively); and 21% experienced a serious emotional reaction such as "shock, fear, stress, depression, anxiety/panic attacks, crying" (Upson, 2006, p.59). Arguably their quality of life was negatively affected because of the behavioural changes respondents made due to their experiences (see Table 2.2 below)

Table 2.2: Behaviour changes as a result of anti-social behaviour problems in the area associated with THA

Behavioural Changes	%
Avoid certain places in my local area	21
Avoid going out after dark	19
Avoid going out on my own	13
Have felt unsafe	13
Improved home/car security	12
Thought about moving away	11
Have encouraged family or friends not to go out alone	11
Not very trusting of people in the local area	9
Use a car/taxi rather than walk in the local area	9
Have not been able to sleep at times	4
Carry a personal security device	2
Actually moved out of an area	1
Have been assaulted	1
Avoid staying at home	1
Other behaviour changes	1

Source: Upson, 2006, p.61

For a more detailed analysis of adults' perceptions of local levels of THA against personal/area characteristics the BCS/CSEW publications for each year between 2004-05 and to 2011-12 were accessed. However, only two of the publications – 2004-05 (Upson, 2006) and 2007-08 (Flatley, Moley and Hoare, 2008) - provided data specific to the individual seven strands of ASB featured in Graph 2.1, including THA. The other publications presented data under the blanket term 'anti-social behaviour', making no distinctions between the seven strands of ASB (including THA) and therefore ignoring the potential varying perceptions respondents may have had relating to the different strands. As a result, a year on year comparison specific to THA over a wider period was not possible. However, two publications provided data current at the time of data collection which contributed to building a national contextual picture against which my research was set. The discussion of data that follows focuses on these two publications.

The tables that follow show the personal characteristics, under a variety of different headings, of those perceiving THA to be a problem. I have grouped the sub-sets of data into a number of broader categorisations in order to aid analysis. A convention has been adopted of assessing the variability within each data set as follows, using the percentage point spread between the lowest and highest values in each data set:

- Low variability: up to 5 percentage points spread
- Medium variability: 6 to 15 percentage points spread
- High variability: > 15 percentage points spread

In each table the figures represent the percentage of all respondents in each row perceiving young persons hanging about as a very/fairly big problem.

Table 2.3: Adult perception by gender of THA as a very/fairly big problem in local area (2004-05 and 2007-08)

Gender	%	
	2004-05 ⁽¹⁾	2007-08 ⁽²⁾
Men	30	31
Women	31	31
Spread	1 point	0 point
Variability	Low	Low

Source: (1) Upson, 2006, p.62; (2) Flatley, Moley and Hoare, 2008, p.21

There was no appreciable difference between the perceptions of men and women in 2004-05, and in 2007-08 the percentage for both men and women stood at 31%.

Table 2.4a: Adult perceptions by age and gender of THA as a very/fairly big problem in local area (2004-05)

Age Bands	Men (%)	Women (%)
16 - 24	35	39
25 - 44	34	34
45 - 64	30	31
65 - 74	22	24
75+	15	15
	Spread: 20 points	Spread: 24 points
	Variability: High	Variability: High

Source: Upson, 2006, p.62

Table 2.4a shows that between 16 and 64 years of age there was low variability for men. For women in this range it was medium, at 8 points. From 65 onwards the percentage reduced sharply for both men and women, which may be explained by the fact that older people go out less. It is however noteworthy that overall, the perception was highest at the youngest age, reducing to its lowest at the oldest age.

Table 2.4b: Adult perceptions by age and gender of THA as a very/fairly big problem in local area (2007-08)

Age Bands	Men (%)	Women (%)
16 - 24	33	42
25 - 34	36	36
35 - 44	36	35
45 - 54	34	31
55 - 64	28	28
65 - 74	22	23
75+	13	14
	Spread: 23 points	Spread: 28 points
	Variability: High	Variability: High

Source: Flatley, Moley and Hoare, 2008, p.21

In period 2007-08 the age range was amended, giving 7 age bands rather than the previous 5. Similar to 2004-05, in the period 2007-08 for men there was a

low variability between the ages of 16-64 (five points). For women aged 16-64 the variability was at the top end of 'medium' with a spread of 14 points. Tables 2.4a and 2.4b show that both males' and females' perceptions of THA as a very/fairly big problem were highest in the 16-24 age band, reducing progressively through the remaining age bands; showing a similar pattern to 2004-05.

Table 2.5a: Adult perceptions of THA as a very/fairly big problem in local area by Index of Multiple Deprivation (2004-05)

Deprivation (Index of Multiple Deprivation, England only)	%
10% most deprived wards	40
Other areas	30
Spread: 10 points	
Variability: Medium	

Source: Upson, 2006, p.63

In Table 2.5a, for period 2004-05, whilst variability at 10 points is medium, the higher problem perception in the 10% most deprived wards is clear. In period 2007/08 the data were presented to show the levels of perception for each decile, giving a better picture of the overall position. Worthy of comment is the increase in perceptions of THA as a very/fairly big problem in the most deprived area – 47% compared with 40% in 2004-05. Also striking is the increased spread of 24 points showing an increased polarisation between the 10% most deprived ward and the 10% least deprived.

Table 2.5b: Adult perceptions of THA as a very/fairly big problem in local area by Index of Multiple Deprivation (2007-08)

Deprivation (Index of Multiple Deprivation, England only)	%
10% most deprived wards	47
...	45
...	38
...	33
...	32
...	27
...	25
...	22
...	23
10% least deprived wards	23
Spread: 24 points	
Variability: High	

Source: Flatley, Moley and Hoare, 2008, p.23

Table 2.6: Adult perceptions of THA as a very/fairly big problem in local area – comparing urban and rural areas (2004-05 and 2007-08)

	2004-05 ⁽¹⁾	2007-08 ⁽²⁾
Area type	%	%
Urban	33	34
Rural	20	19
Spread	13 points	
Variability	Medium	

Source: (1) Upson, 2006, p.63; (2) Flatley, Moley and Hoare, 2008, p.23

These datasets demonstrate the significantly higher percentages in urban areas than rural settings. Relating to 2004-05 data, Upson (2006) made the point that scores for the predominantly rural areas of East of England, South West and Wales are the lowest. The variables focused on above relate to the types of data I felt it would be feasible to collect during my research and against which my local data could be compared. Also, as it was outside the scope of my research to undertake a rigorous statistical analysis of quantitative data I made the decision to exclude a discussion of other personal, household and area variables covered by Upson (2006) and Flatley, Moley and Hoare (2008).

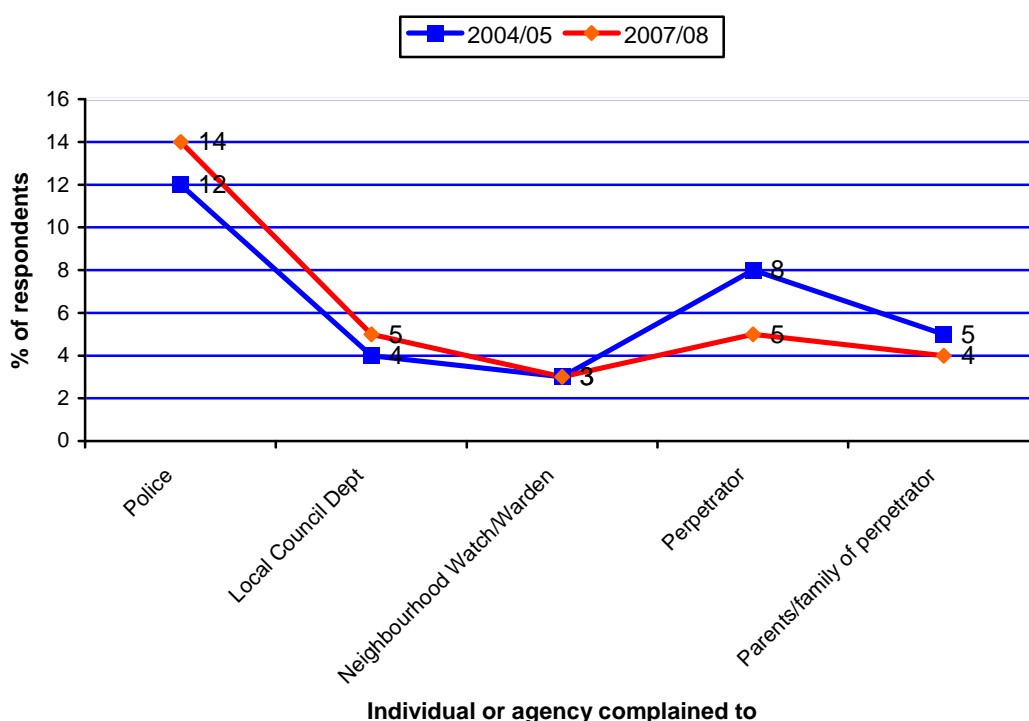
Much of the discussion undertaken above relates to national statistics, and gives no insight into localised construction of the problem. However it clearly reinforces the notions that there are 'plural norms' of acceptable behaviour and that context plays an important part in determining what individuals perceived to be anti-social (Millie, 2009). Squires (2008) gives credence to this view by arguing that "anti-social behaviour is emphatically about perceptions, relationships and interactions and contexts" (p.368). Atkinson and Flint (2004) and Flint, et al. (2007) argue that perceptions of what constitutes ASB can vary considerably, even between residents within one street. An important element of any case study research is establishing the context within which the research is set (Creswell, 2007). It is with these factors in mind, and taking a social constructionist approach, that my first proposition developed - residents' perceptions of youth-related anti-social behaviour are influenced by a number of factors, including government policy, local context and individuals' characteristics.

Public Responses to ASB

In early talks with the Borough Council its view was that frequently residents relied too heavily on the police and local authorities to deal with perceived teenager ASB. Interestingly, at the time the national picture suggested that the majority who had negative experiences 73% (Upson, 2006; Flatley, Moley and Hoare, 2008) complained to no-one. Of those who had experienced THA locally 19% (Upson, 2006) and 22% (Flatley, Moley and Hoare, 2008) had brought it to the attention of someone in authority (for example, police, local council department, Neighbourhood Watch). Only 13% (Upson, 2006) and 9%

(Flatley, Moley and Hoare, 2008) had spoken directly to the individual/group concerned or to a parent/family member.

Graph 2.5: Reporting of THA incidents among adults who experienced incidents in local area (2004-05)



Source: Upson, 2006, p.55; Flatley, Moley and Hoare, 2008, p.29.

Reasons for non-reporting were only included in the 2004/05 survey (Upson, 2006, p.57) and are represented in Table 2.7 below. Notably, while a significant percentage of respondents felt reporting THA was 'too trivial/waste of time' and 'police/authorities would not be interested or could not do anything', few dealt with the problem directly even though the percentage fearful of reprisal was also low. On the other hand 66% of respondents perceived ASB committed by THA as deliberate acts perhaps causing individuals to assume that their intervention might attract a more aggressive response.

Table 2.7: Reasons for not reporting anti-social behaviour in connection with THA

Reason Given	%
Too trivial/waste of time	41
Police/authorities not interested/could not do anything	22
Fear of reprisal	15
Did not know who to contact	10
Did not want to get involved	9
Private/dealt with ourselves	6
Already reported	3
Police-related reasons	1
Just something that happens	1
Other reason	1

Source: Upson, 2006, p.57

Causes of Anti-social behaviour

Early in my literature review I had not sought out explicit investigations into the causes of ASB. However, in the free flow of conversations in the focus groups conducted in Location E and WW a discussion developed relating to participants' views on causality. Accordingly I undertook a further literature search, to which I now turn.

In 2005, Millie, Jacobson, McDonald and Hough canvassed nearly 1,700 adults in three different UK regions for their views on what caused YP to engage in ASB (Millie, 2009). Of this number, 68% considered poor parenting the main causal factor. The findings suggested that inadequate parenting skills mean YP do not learn what is and is not socially acceptable, and they disengage from wider society which results in their ASB (Millie, Jacobson, McDonald, and Hough, 2005). Longitudinal research in the Cambridge Study by Farrington into delinquent development provides compelling evidence that poor parenting is a factor. The findings also cite the intra-generational transmission from parent to child of "bad behaviour or aggressions" (Millie, 2009, p.59; Burney, 2009).

The second most cited perceived causal factor emerging from Millie's, Jacobson's, McDonald's, and Hough's (2005) research was boredom experienced by YP as a result of having nothing to do (58%). One sympathetic respondent commented "They [YP] just muck about in the field because that's the only space – they are always being told, you can't go there, you can't go there" (p.26). However, Millie (2009) suggests it is conceivable that "boredom is not a cause of ASB, but rather a symptom of other issues in young people's lives" (p.63); for example unemployment or lack of suitable open space.

Drugs and alcohol use, and low respect for others were quoted as causing youth-related ASB by 52% and 51% of respondents respectively. Both Millie (2009) and Burney (2009) acknowledge that the use of drugs and alcohol might induce behaviour perceived by others as anti-social. Alcohol consumption has long been linked to ASB, but more recently it has been associated with problem behaviour by 'lager louts', binge drinking and a rise in under-age drinking. However, Millie (2009) argues that the blaming for anti-social behaviour on alcohol consumption may have been "exaggerated by the media into a typical moral panic" (p.64). Burney (2009) argues that the increased visibility of under-aged drinking by YP may fuel the public's negative perceptions of YP gathering in open spaces, which are further exacerbated by YP's alcohol consumption "disinhibiting them from behaving in ways that are inconsiderate or rude" (p.86). The fact that 51% of respondents in Millie, Jacobson, McDonald, and Hough (2005) felt that low respect for others was a cause of ASB by YP is perhaps not surprising. For some time each generation of adults has seen in the next, younger, generation a decline of respect for adults (Millie, 2009). Waiton (2001) argues that adults' perceptions of lack of respect shown by YP might be fuelled

by lack of interaction between generations. He feels that government policy, particularly since 1997, has contributed to this and to the diminution of informal control within neighbourhoods; factors I will return to later in this chapter.

Social factors are also blamed for YP's anti-social behaviour, for example the decline in society's social and moral values (Millie, Jacobson, McDonald, and Hough, 2005; Millie, 2009). Millie (2009) highlights the work of Cohen in 1972 and 2002 arguing that the description of YP's behaviour as deviant is often over-exaggerated, as is its frequency of occurrence, leading to moral panic. Whilst not denying youth-related ASB exists, Pearson (cited in Millie, 2009, p.42) argues that "clearly we are in the midst of a moral panic concerning hoodies ... and ASB". Some respondents in Millie's, Jacobson's, McDonald's, and Hough's research (2005) acknowledged that testing the boundaries of acceptable behaviour, and risk taking, are part of growing up.

Part of the problem may lie with the intolerance of adults towards YP (Burney, 2009). Millie (2007) argues that "there are obviously issues of intolerance or suspicion of 'otherness'. Generational conflict has a longstanding tradition and is currently illustrated in concerns over young people congregating in groups". (Millie, 2007, p.621)

Waiton (2008b) also argues that the adult disquiet associated with YP's use of public space results from lack of tolerance on adults' part. The children's charity, Barnardo's, reiterated this sentiment, based on its poll which suggested that there is a serious intolerance of YP in public space by adults (Barnardo's, 2008 online). This is a subject I return to in Chapters 6 and 9.

In his research in three deprived urban areas in Scotland, Flint (2002) found that the accusation of ASB often stemmed from intergenerational divisions related to contested use of space, and what were perceived to be 'legitimate activities' (p.629). As I discuss later, the act of meeting together in public space plays an important role in YP's socialisation and their transition into independent individuals, yet their use of public space is frequently contested by adults (Burney, 2009). Millie (2009) argues that intolerance shown by adults of YP's use of open space can result in them "[P]athologising youths who are mainly involved in normal pursuits – playing football, skateboarding, riding mopeds, playing music – which perhaps thoughtlessly cause damage or intrude on the peace and quiet of older people" (p.79).

Structural factors blamed for YP's ASB includes poor discipline within schools; a quarter of the respondents in Millie's, Jacobson's, McDonald's and Hough's research in 2005 considered this the case (Millie, 2009). In particular, the opinion was that schools were no longer competent in disciplining pupils or teaching moral values. It was felt that their authority had been undermined because "the teachers at school can only do so much now, because it's a nanny state, and the kids are let off things because the teacher won't get involved in case they get sorted out" (Millie, Jacobson, McDonald, and Hough, 2005, p.22).

Similarly, ineffective policing was also cited as a cause of youth-related ASB, although only 14% of respondents mentioned this (Millie, Jacobson, McDonald, and Hough, 2005). The shortcomings of the police were attributed to them not taking a hard-line with offenders and the inadequacy of the criminal justice system generally.

A similar percentage of respondents (14%) felt that poverty and deprivation contributed to youths acting anti-socially (Millie, 2009). This is perhaps not surprising given the BCS's findings discussed earlier, namely that one of the predictors of THA was living in 'hard-pressed areas'. Burney (2009) highlights that a higher percentage of YP live in deprived areas than in more affluent areas. She does make the point, however, that although deprivation and associated lack of facilities are usually linked with urban areas, poor leisure facilities and lack of transport in rural areas can have a causal link to youth-related ASB.

Teenagers Hanging Around – a part of growing up or anti-social behaviour?

As children move towards their teenage years it is normal for them to want to establish a degree of autonomy and to spend more of their leisure time outside adult control. Whilst family and school still play an important part in their development, YP are likely to spend more time with their peers (Margo, Dixon, Pearce and Reed, 2006). Squires (2008) cites past research which proposed that informal activity such as "meeting friends, playing games, chatting and socialising' are important aspects" (pp.227-9) in individuals' development and are part of the childhood to adulthood transition (Matthews, Limb and Percy-Smith, 1998).

A large proportion of YP's time is spent under adult supervision, either in the home or at school. For some, time spent meeting friends in public places is valued because it is unfettered by familial and school obligations and rules (Hall, Coffey and Williamson, 1999). For those living in cramped family

accommodation, meeting friends in open public space might be the only option. If tensions and conflict exist within the family home, the streets might be a welcome release (Cotterell, 2007). Adolescence is a time to establish an identity, and one way to achieve it is by mixing socially with friends and 'parading' in front of peers, donning the latest fashions.

For those who want to get away from 'authority', the venues YP frequently use are public places; such as street corners, shopping malls, parks, outside local shops. If one particular place is deemed unsafe – for example because of group rivalry - another will be found. In a UK study carried out involving 449 pupils aged 12-15 respondents felt that, given their perception that the local park was unsafe in the evenings, the best place to gather was the street. Even on occasions when the weather was inclement, street-based gatherings still occurred because it provided the opportunity to meet with friends, and "have a laugh or relieve tedium and boredom" away from parental control (Nayak, 2003, p.310).

France (2007) emphasises that public space, including the street, holds a strong significance in terms of a venue for YP to meet and socialise. The importance of YP's access to public outdoor space is also articulated by White (1998 cited by Malone, 2002); saying that the street:

"[R]epresents for many young people a place to express themselves without close parental or 'adult' control It is also a sphere or domain where things happen, where there are people to see and where one can be seen by others. In short, for many young people the street is an important site for social activity". (White, 1998 cited in Malone, 2002, p.162)

Similarly, some individuals will favour meeting in the street, outside shops or in other open public places rather than youth clubs or other youth-related organisations because the latter are run by adults and with adult-imposed rules (Muncie, 2004). Even where indoor activities are offered, such as leisure centres or bowling alleys, outdoor areas are attractive because they are free, an important consideration for YP with little or no disposable income (Elsley, 2004; Nayak, 2003).

YP in urban areas find limits to the outdoor areas available; they are too old for playgrounds (and may be moved on if they attempt to use them) and too young for venues such as pubs and clubs. Crane (1999), Matthews, Taylor and Percy-Smith (2000), and France (2007) talk about the transformation of public space into private with the development of indoor shopping centres, “private housing estates and the selling-off of public land” (France, 2007, p.101) and how this impacts negatively on the space freely available to youth. Crane (1999) suggests that with the increase in home ownership more people perceive public space, such as parks and green spaces, to be part of their own territory. He argues that:

“Residents living adjacent to a public park may feel that this is ‘their’ park, and see benefit worth fighting for in terms of the peace and quiet, the view, and improved property value. The outcome can often be that young people’s access to space is made secondary to other interests”. (Crane, 1999, p.2)

It is argued that increased regulatory surveillance of public space, and public space being designed for and perceived to belong to adults, also marginalises YP (Matthews, Taylor and Percy-Smith, 2000).

A good example of the privatisation of public space is shopping areas. It is not uncommon for indoor venues, such as shopping malls, to be patrolled by guards who have the authority to move on or ban YP. This might be the case whether groups of teenagers have actually been witnessed acting anti-socially or not. Research has shown that many YP are frustrated that adults often generalise and stigmatise the majority based on the behaviour of the minority (Hughes, et al., 2006).

YP in rural areas are no different to their urban peers; their desire for independent space follows similar patterns. Indeed, according to Moore (2003) bus shelters, war memorials and the area outside village shops are rural equivalents of urban meeting places. A common perception of children and teenagers being able to roam freely in the idyllic open countryside is not necessarily true; like their urban counterparts, they are often restricted. This may be because of the geographic limitations imposed by parents worried about 'stranger danger', lack of transport to travel round, or being denied access to fields and woodland by local farmers (Matthews, et al., 2000; Matthews, Taylor and Percy-Smith, 2000).

However, the act of hanging around, no matter how innocuously intended can attract disapproval from adults. Goldsmith (2008) talks about normal activities of YP being seen as ASB – meeting with friends, chatting and socialising. Some adults perceive such a pastime as 'loitering' and likely to undermine social order. As Hall, Coffey and Williamson (1999) explained "it is the seeming lack of productive activity as much as anything specific which infuriates and prompts allegations of deviance" (p.507). Sibley (1999 cited in Matthews,

Taylor, and Percy-Smith, 2000) suggests that “adults interpret the public domain as their own private space and that when young people congregate together their presence is often seen to be polluting and discrepant” (p.146). Groups of YP congregating in public places can be perceived by adults as a threat to their safety and well being. What is not appreciated is that this ‘grouping’ can provide a sense of safety to the young (Crawshaw, 2002; Foreman, 2004; Pain, et al., 2001). Research into how parents and children managed risk found that some YP consciously grouped together in outdoor spaces to ‘look out for each other’ (Seaman, et al., 2006).

Government Response

It was not until the latter stages of my study that New Labour was superseded by the Coalition government. Pre-election promises to change ASB-related policy were made, with proposed changes appearing in a White Paper in May 2012 (Home Office, 2012). Accordingly, my commentary will focus primarily on policy introduced by New Labour, specifically on the policy instruments introduced to tackle ASB, with a brief discussion of the underlying ideology.

The ASB-related policy introduced by New Labour was set against an ideological backdrop of “Etzioni’s conservative variant of communitarianism” (Jamieson, 2005, p182). As Jamieson (2005) succinctly explains:

“The core themes of Etzioni’s communitarianism that call for renewal and revitalisation of community values and institutions, and the prioritisation of the needs and rights of victims and ‘law-abiding’ citizens, have proved central to New Labour’s ambitions to emphasise the individual’s responsibilities and obligations to society”. (Jamieson, 2005, p.182)

It is argued that this approach was favoured by New Labour as an antidote to the individualism and the market economy promoted by Conservative governments between 1979 and 1997, and as an alternative to the socialism of Old Labour (Driver and Martell, 1997).

Whilst a major influence on Tony Blair's approach is attributed to Etzioni, others are also regarded as influential (see Driver and Martell, 1997). In an exercise to "disentangle New Labour's communitarianism" Driver and Martell (1997, pp.29-32) identified six binary dimensions upon which the government had drawn: conformist-pluralist; less conditional-more conditional; progressive-conservative; prescriptive-voluntary; moral-socio-economic; individual-corporate. Some, if not all, are evident in ASB-related policy and are identifiable in the policies discussed below, although a detailed discussion of these dimensions goes beyond the scope of this study.

Within a year of New Labour's 1997 election win, the Crime and Disorder Act (CDA) 1998 was introduced. Although this was the new government's first significant piece of legislation relating to crime policy, much of its content was influenced by the previous Conservative government. Previously the police had held statutory responsibility for crime prevention and community safety. The CDA 1998 extended responsibility to LAs; the Anti-Social Behaviour Act 2003 extended statutory responsibility to Housing Officers and the Transport Police (Flint and Nixon, 2006). In line with the pluralist dimension of communitarianism which embraces diversity within communities and decentralisation of control, there was to be a move away from state-dominated government to local governance:

“The term governance refers to a set of institutions beyond state government, which are mutually dependent on achieving their goals, entail a certain degree of self-direction and interact on a relatively equal basis. Negation and consensus are part and parcel of the way collective action is carried out”. (Steden, Caem and Boutellier, 2011, p.434)

A CDA (1998) requirement at local level was the creation of multi-agency Crime and Disorder Reduction Partnerships (CDRPs), whose role was to develop local crime reduction strategies based on local community level audits. This policy change was aimed at making local government agencies more accountable to neighbourhoods and encouraging individuals to become more active citizens (Pearson, 2009).

In the White Paper preceding the ASB Act 2003, the then Home Secretary, David Blunkett, pledged the government’s commitment to providing legislative tools to enforcement agencies. However, he also emphasised government’s desire to mobilise community members (individuals, families, residents’ association) to take a stand against anti-social behaviour:

“Effective local action requires support from local people, who are prepared to come forward with information, willing to challenge unacceptable behaviour, and committed to dealing with local problems, knowing that they will be supported by their neighbours, friends and professional agencies”. (Home Officer, 2003b, p.51)

This called for individuals to become more active citizens and take more responsibility for the governance of their neighbourhoods. Based on communitarian ideology, the emphasis was on local governance and what Garland (1997) described as a ‘responsibilisation strategy’. He used the term to describe a government strategy which encourages other agencies and

communities to play an active role in governance when government identified limitations in its own ability.

Whilst local governance was promoted, overall strategy for and control of ASB-related policy stayed with central government, as did target setting and funding streams. The government created the Home Office ASB Unit which steered local policy. Following the ASB Act 2003 the government launched the TOGETHER campaign, publicised through regional roadshows to raise public awareness of the ASB Action Line and Academy of Practitioners. Underpinning these activities was the Home Office five-year strategic plan 'to put the interests of the law-abiding citizens first, stating that the department would take a "no-tolerance approach to anti-social behaviour" (Home Office, 2004b, p.5). 2006 saw the creation of the Respect Task Force (RTF, 2006), subsequently renamed the Youth Task Force (YTF). They focused on youth-related ASB, principally concentrating on working with parents and children/youths in 'problem families', seeking to curb unacceptable behaviour and instil respect for other community members and responsibility for one's own actions (Burney, 2009).

Whilst retaining some existing punitive policies, such as curfew orders, New Labour introduced a raft of new punitive instruments for use by local statutory agencies. The rationale for putting a high emphasis on tackling ASB was those who commit anti-social acts often go on to commit crime, and tackling ASB could prevent this progression (Waiton, 2008a). This reflects the broken windows theory, and zero tolerance mentioned earlier in this chapter (Muncie, 2004).

New instruments to tackle ASB included Acceptable Behaviour Contracts, Anti-Social Behaviour Orders, Dispersal Orders and Local Child Curfews. Although initially the government denied policy was primarily aimed at YP, some critics argued the contrary. The discussion does not cover all ASB-orientated instruments; only those that can be directly served on YP are included. New 'official' roles were also introduced, for example, ASB co-ordinators and CPSOs. As a result of the ASB Act 2003, Housing Officers were tasked with addressing ASB by tenants. Brown (2004, p.203) argues that this "new domain of professional power and knowledge" serves to widen the net of formal social control. Similar sentiments are expressed by Muncie (2004) and Stephen (2006).

There are various strands of criticism of New Labour's policy described above. For example, research has shown that some CDRPs felt frustrated that the decentralisation and policy responses at grassroots level were hampered by central government's imposition of centrally defined strategies, targets and funding streams. Whilst multi-agency working was considered a pragmatic and efficient policy response, in practice tensions arose when agencies had their own ways of working and priorities. Equally, community members who embrace active citizenship are not always representative of a neighbourhood's diversity. Hope (2005) argued that local organisations such as Neighbourhood Panels may "comprise 'local worthies' unrepresentative of socially heterogeneous and culturally diverse neighbourhoods" (p.382). A similar sentiment has since been expressed by Steden, Caem and Boutellier (2011) who argue that:

“Citizen participation is easier to develop in middle-class areas ...while community organisations are less common in the poor, disadvantaged area where they are most needed” (Steden, Caem and Boutellier, 2011, p.436).

Whilst I acknowledge that these and other policy criticisms are important, in the following discussion I limit myself to policy responses most relevant to my research. Citizens’ participation in local governance is discussed further in Chapter 3.

As discussed earlier in this chapter, the definition of ASB is vague and broad. The government argued that it is difficult to be objective in listing behaviours likely to adversely affect individuals. Whilst there is some justification for this reasoning, critics are concerned that in ASB legislation the burden of proof of guilt is less rigorous than in criminal law. They fear that agencies responsible for dealing with criminal behaviour may utilise ASB channels, thereby sidestepping some of the criminal justice system’s expensive and time-consuming procedures. This engenders concerns about the accused’s human right to a fair hearing and due process (Millie, 2007).

Squires (2006) argues that the high profile given to tackling ASB has exaggerated the scale of the problem and raised the public’s negative perception. Hope (2005) raises an issue that resonates with the views of the professionals I worked with; with statutory agencies’ additional powers to deal with lower level nuisance, the danger is that the public increasingly look to them to deal with issues which do not warrant it. It is further argued that a cyclical process occurs; the more frequently agencies act, the more is expected, and

the authorities become overloaded resulting in their inability to deliver control which in turn diminishes public trust (Hope, 2005).

Some specific ASB-related instruments have been criticised. The CDA 1998 introduced the Anti-Social Behaviour Order (ASBO), a civil order which aims to responsabilise the recipient, embracing what Crawford (2003) terms 'contractual governance'. The Order can be imposed on individuals aged 10 and upwards and consists of a list of agreed conditions to which the recipient must adhere for a specified period, with a minimum of two years. Contravention of any of the conditions can result in a prison sentence of up to five years (Muncie, 2004; Flint and Nixon, 2006). Although the government claimed the ASBO was introduced to curb 'nuisance neighbours', subsequent evidence suggests that it has been used to target youth-related 'rowdy and unruly' behaviour (Muncie, 2004, p.237). This has proved a controversial policy instrument "subject to a barrage of criticisms" (Muncie, 2004, p.237).

Before an ASBO is imposed the statutory agency may deem an Acceptable Behaviour Contract appropriate. This is a voluntary contract containing agreed restrictions on the recipient. Failure to adhere to the conditions set out may result in an application being made to the civil courts for the imposition of an ASBO, contravention of which can lead to imprisonment. A major criticism of this trajectory is that it criminalises non-criminal or sub-criminal behaviour (Helms and Atkinson, 2007; Margo, Dixon, Pearce and Reed, 2006; Mooney and Young, 2006; Muncie, 2004; Pitts, 2001). Burney (2002) points out that although the new policy process was expected to be cheaper and quicker, this

in fact is not the case. Applications for ASBOs can suffer the same sorts of time delays and additional costs as criminal cases.

Chakrabarti and Russell (2008) voice concern that vague definitions of ASB could result in wide and inappropriate variations in applying the legislation:

“The lack of definition and procedural protection, combined with police and local authority involvement, ... gives little regard to constitutional concerns about how such broad powers may be used and abused by accident or design by central or local government in years to come”. (Chakrabarti and Russell, 2008, p.316)

Drawing on Becker’s labelling theory, Hodgkinson and Tilley (2007) voiced concern that youths subject to an ASBO and labelled as deviant within their local community might, in some cases, internalise the label resulting in ‘secondary deviance’. Equally the process of raising communities’ awareness of the imposition of an ASBO on an individual through the naming and shaming strategy may result in stigmatisation or being the focus of vigilantism.

Alternatively, some recipients of an ASBO may see it as a badge of honour, elevating their social status among their peers. It is argued that this is unlikely to deter either breaching the Order or committing new acts of anti-social behaviour or crime (Hodgkinson and Tilley, 2007).

Payne (2003) and Stephen (2008) criticise the government’s punitive approach; they argue that the restrictions imposed through the enforcement policies discussed in this section contravene certain Articles (including Article 3 – best interests of the child; Article 15 – freedom of association) contained in the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child. Payne (2003) goes on to argue that the enforcement policy is inappropriate, particularly when taking account of

some of the causes underlying YP's ASB, namely poor parenting skills and pressure of social, family and financial problems. She argues multi-agency support systems are needed, both for the YP and parents. It is normal for YP to test rules and boundaries of acceptable behaviour as defined by others, but Payne (2003) expresses concern that such acts are now being criminalised by punitive policy:

“[T]he blurring of anti-social with criminal behaviour, and the way in which the law and order agenda is now gaining predominance in an area where an early multi-agency, welfare-based response is almost always more effective than punishment, stigmatisation and exclusion”. (Payne, 2003, p.322)

The conditions set out in an ASBO can cover a wide range of restrictions, including restriction on specific types of clothing, geographical areas, and contact with specified friends. Flint and Smithson (2007) argue that “overall these measures represent an increasingly extensive monitoring and regulation of YP's use of public space as the welfare orientation of youth policy has become increasingly punitive” (p.168).

Another policy instrument criticised for contravening civil rights is the Dispersal Order. Under the ASB Act 2003, within geographically defined areas where persistent ASB prevailed, subject to the agreement of the LA, police could seek an Order valid for up to 6 months empowering them to disperse groups of two or more people. Failure to comply with a police request to leave the area could attract either a fine or three months imprisonment (Crawford and Lister, 2007). The Order allows the police to return anyone below 17 to their home address. According to research carried out by Crawford and Lister (2007), although the Dispersal Order resulted from police requests for tools to tackle ASB, it received

police criticism. Whilst recognised as a useful interim measure, one interviewee described it as 'only a sticking plaster'; it did not provide an adequate lasting solution, but enabled longer term tactics to be developed. Another concern was the unintended consequence that local residents expected an increased level of police presence for the duration of the Order, which was not necessarily the case. Also, given the relatively short duration of an Order, unsuccessful demands by residents for renewal could lead to tensions with the police.

Other criticisms of the Order relate to the negative impact on YP. I referred earlier to literature arguing that YP congregate in public spaces in order to feel safer. This view was reinforced by Crawford's (2009) research where 82% of YP said "they felt safest in public places in groups"; of these, two-thirds said "they felt safest in groups of six or more" (p.11). Being prevented from doing this because of a Dispersal Order adversely affects YP's sense of safety. A further perception was that not only had relationships between the police and YP suffered, but negative intergenerational relationships had also been exacerbated. One resident's view was:

"I believe that the dispersal order has given young people feelings of unfairness and injustice. It gives them a reason to be angry ... Older people see any gathering of young people as anti-social. In my understanding, the dispersal order has widened the misunderstanding between all". (Crawford, 2009, p.13)

Similarly, urban-based research by Flint and Smithson (2007) found that Dispersal Orders had been ineffective in reducing the level of ASB, had no impact on reducing adult intolerance of YP, and had had no positive impact on community relations or on residents considered 'serial complainers'.

The Curfew Order gives the police the power to constrain YP's presence in public places after a specified time, usually in the evening (Muncie, 2004). Waiton (2008) argues that an unintended consequence would be children increasingly growing up in a culture of authoritarian and institutional dependency. This results in them being unable to build relationships both with other members of their own peer group and with other generations. This would be damaging to them as individuals and to the community as a whole (Waiton, 2008).

Waiton's (2008) opinion is based on research carried out in Hamilton, Scotland where the option of a curfew on YP and greater policing was being trialled. He feels that curfews prevent children having any unregulated free time away from home and school when they can interact with friends and peers, especially when a dusk to dawn timescale is imposed. Similarly, he argues that intergenerational relationships suffer because adults are increasingly relying on police to control the young rather than, as before, playing a role themselves in teaching the young what is socially acceptable. This is also detrimental to older people's sense of well-being because the heightened police attention directed towards YP's activities increases adults' perceived fear of crime. All of the above has a negative impact on individuals' social capital and sense of citizenship (Waiton 2008).

In 2005, following New Labour's re-election for a third term, Tony Blair announced the creation of the Respect Task Force (RTF). Although the RTF was discontinued in October 2007 much of its work continued within the Youth Task Force (Millie, 2009). The RTF was underpinned by the rationale that

disrespect and anti-social behaviour go hand in hand, and it was for the government to take the lead in improving the level of respect shown to others by the disrespectful minority. It was envisaged this could be done through a “heavy emphasis on enforcing standards of behaviour; for instance, that young people will be made to take the help they need” (Millie, 2009, p.3).

Policy focused not only on YP, but also on those parents deemed to have poor parenting skills to instil society’s common values, in line with communitarian ideology. But Bannister and Kearns (2009) suggest that perversely, policy created an ‘othering’ process, a them and us situation between the ‘respectful’ and ‘disrespectful’.

Somerville (2009) criticises the RTF for imposing a centric-oriented policy enforced through a punitive approach that failed to address the root causes of disrespect. This encourages a complaints culture where people rely unduly on formal social control rather than attempting to exercise informal control through communication, mediation, or negotiation. These arguments resonate with the views of LA personnel and indeed represented one of the main drivers of my research, as described in Chapter 1.

Policy focused on YP being respectful towards adults but, it is argued, failed to address the intolerance sometimes shown by adults towards YP. Bannister and Kearns (2009) argue that where a one-way process is adopted, respect is unlikely to “flourish and survive” (p.193), and that “policies for tolerance in different contexts may prove more useful than policies which merely regulate

behaviour on the basis of demands for respect” (p.183). The above is consistent with the underlying principles of my booklet design, which seeks to change mindsets rather than focusing only on YP’s behaviour.

In July 2010 the Home Secretary of the recently elected Coalition government announced an intended overhaul of policy to tackle ASB. The focus would be on “streamlining and improving the toolkit, ensuring it offers better protection to victims and communities and a more effective deterrent to the perpetrators” (Home Office, 2011b, p.9). In May 2012 a White Paper (Home Office 2012) was published in which it was proposed that 19 of the existing powers would be replaced by 6. Most relevant to my research is the replacement of the ASBO with a Criminal Behaviour Order (CBO), and replacing the Dispersal Order with a Directions Power (DP) which the authorities could enforce without a lengthy application process. Compared with the ASBO it is suggested that the CBO would involve a simplified process; but would similarly be a civil order and if breached could attract a custodial sentence.

A new proposed initiative which, at the time of writing, was under trial in three regions was the Community Trigger (CT). Where an individual makes three or more complaints about the same problem, or five individuals complain about the same problem, agencies would be required to take action. The underlying rationale is that this will prevent no action being taken despite repeated complaints. According to the Department for Communities and Local Government the introduction of the Community Trigger will result in a “new era of people power” (DCLG, 2010, p.286). However, Millie (2011) expresses doubt that this will be realised:

“There is a risk that only certain people will be consulted and only those with sufficient social and political capital will be able and willing to take on the ‘Big Society’ mantle. Unless their views are actively sought, experience tells us that disempowered minority and marginalised groups are less likely to be involved”. (Millie, 2011, p.286).

In addition to the above, the Coalition government is developing an inter-departmental programme aimed at rehabilitating an estimated 120,000 ‘troubled families’ to break the cycle of persistent ASB. These are families categorised as having “no adult in the family working, children not being in school and family members being involved in crime and anti-social behaviour” (DCLG, 2012, p.1). Government funding will be made available to local authorities to enable them to work with the families to improve their behaviour. It could be argued that the Troubled Family Programme (TFP) is not dissimilar to the Family Intervention Programme introduced by the Labour government in 2006, in which a key professional, supported by local agencies, works with whole families to tackle their ASB (Casey, 2012). However, a key feature of the TFP is the criteria against which LAs will receive funding; after an initial part payment they will only be eligible to collect the remaining available funding if a family has made progress against laid down objectives (DCLG, 2012).

At the time of writing, all of the above policies (Criminal Behaviour Order, Directions Power, Community Trigger and Troubled Family Programme) were still in the developmental stage and therefore no evaluations of their feasibility or effectiveness were available.

Alternative Approaches to Tackling ASB

The policy responses discussed above focus on changing YP's behaviour through various initiatives broadly characterised as 'enforcement'. However, Bland and Read (2000) and Hodgkinson and Tilley (2007) argue that there is no evidence that enforcement alone is enough. Research by Millie, Jacobson, Hough and Paraskevopoulou (2005) includes focus group findings recommending a combination of preventative and enforcement measures (p.35). Payne (2003) in her criticism of New Labour ASB policy advocates greater use of multi-agency support.

My interpretation of these suggestions is that both 'enforcement' and 'preventative' approaches are aimed largely at YP, and do not lead to a reduction in negative adult perceptions of the type which I argue can be appropriate in certain categories of ASB. It is also debatable to what extent such approaches are effective in stemming the number of minor complaints reported to the authorities. Whereas 'managing' YP will have to be ongoing and indeed repeated with succeeding generations, attitude change on the part of adults has the potential to be more permanent.

Adopting a different approach, Waiton (2001) advocates more direct interaction between generations. Examples include older adults being welcomed into schools to pass on their knowledge and skills to children, and children being encouraged to help older community members with everyday chores such as shopping and gardening.

However, Donohue (2010), a supporter of ASBOs, is sceptical about individuals' and neighbourhoods' willingness to take an active role in tackling ASB. Referring specifically to reducing ASB, Waiton (2001) is against deploying 'officials' who can sometimes fuel tension further, but promotes the idea of bringing the opposing factions together, to communicate face-to-face as a constructive means to reducing tensions. Police Officers in Manchester and Cleveland, where they felt residents' complaints were unreasonable, had adopted a two-pronged common-sense approach. They aimed to give reassurance to residents, and then secondly to generate "a more sympathetic understanding of the problem, often by highlighting the limited facilities available to young people" (Bland and Read, 2000, p.14). This is a discussion I will return to in Chapter 3, and supports the rationale underlying the Let's Talk booklet.

A final set of considerations in this section is local focus. Burney (2009) argues, in view of the broad definition of anti-social behaviour, that New Labour's "one size fits all" approach is inappropriate, and that there should be "local responses to local problems" (Burney, 2009, p.167). Hodgkinson and Tilley (2007) suggest that to focus primarily on an enforcement strategy is inappropriate; it fails to acknowledge the positive effect that community-based, social measures can provide. Seeking to pre-empt the need for enforcement, they promote a multi-dimensional, staged approach including bespoke community-based projects relevant to local circumstances. The last point is strongly supported by Prior (2009) who argues that "anti-social behaviour manifests itself in different ways across different communities ... agencies should have the flexibility to determine what constitutes anti-social behaviour at a local level" (p.19). I

support the views of Burney (2009), Hodgkinson and Tilley (2007), and Prior (2009) above; they are significant drivers of my own research.

Summary

The literature discussed in this chapter highlights the concept of 'teenager' and 'youth' as a social construct. For many people in the UK a negative, and in many cases strongly negative, perception of teenagers has developed.

Negative media reporting contributes to a frequent perception that teenagers behave badly. Certainly since New Labour came into government in 1997, anti-social behaviour in general has been a significant social issue. Teenagers' behaviour, which some view as a normal part of growing up, is felt by others to be a real cause of concern which has a negative effect on their quality of life. THA in public places is highest in the list of categories of ASB according to the BCS. The 'privatisation' of formerly public space, and some teenagers' preference to be within rather than out of sight, further affect the situation.

The high level of public concern about ASB has led to policy action by national government, focusing on punitive measures, which it is argued has had little effect on the concern expressed by the public, and has been criticised by various experts. A significant criticism is that this policy approach leads to the criminalisation of actions which in themselves are not criminal offences.

Literature suggests that a high percentage of behaviours associated with THA are low level nuisance rather than criminal acts and the great majority of people take no action in response to perceived ASB such as THA. Of those who do, by far the most frequent action is recourse to police or the LA. However in many cases the activities are below the severity threshold at which the authorities

judge they should become involved. The proportion of people who are prepared to take action themselves in an effort to resolve problems appears very low. These factors echo the views of the BC and SNT personnel that there is over-reliance on formal control, and their wish is to explore an alternative approach such as mine.

Intergenerational programmes have become an increasing focus of interest in the UK during the last decade. By definition, tensions between adults and YP are an intergenerational issue. In the next chapter I turn to research on IP and its potential for use in addressing ASB.

Chapter 3

Teenagers Hanging Around: introducing a 'grassroots' approach to tackling low level anti-social behaviour

In the previous chapter I identified the use of Intergenerational Practice (IP) as a possible way of addressing ASB. This constitutes a less punitive approach of the type which receives considerable support as is demonstrated in the literature discussed in Chapter 3.

More recently, the government has been advocating the use of IP. Speaking on behalf of Beverley Hughes (Minister of State for Children, Young People and Families) at a seminar on the 20th October 2008, a representative of the Department for Children, Schools and Families (DCSF) acknowledged that IP could play a part in addressing various Public Service Agreements (Dare, 2008). Dare particularly emphasised their effectiveness in addressing PSA 14: *Increase the number of children and young people on the path to success*; PSA 17: *Tackle poverty and promote greater independence and wellbeing in later life*; PSA 18: *Promote better health and well being for all*; PSA 21 - *Build more cohesive, empowered and active communities*. (HM Treasury, 2008). To add weight to its support of IP, the DCSF committed £5.5 million to fund their design and implementation (DCSF, 2009).

A report produced jointly by HM Treasury and the DCSF similarly underlined the value of IP. By involving adult volunteers in youth-related programmes, adults would stand to appreciate “the issues and challenges young people face” (HM Treasury and DCSF, 2007, p.41); and YP would gain an appreciation of other community members’ needs.

A report by the Commission on Integration and Cohesion (CIC) made recommendations both for racial and faith-based relations, and for intergenerational community relations (CIC, 2007), citing a comment from Age Concern:

“Most recent attention around diversity and community cohesion in the UK has been focused on issues of race and faith ... However, in the UK ... intergenerational conflict may be as pressing or a more pressing issue in cohesion and quality of life”. (CIC, 2007, p.83)

The potential for IP to assist in regenerating disadvantaged neighbourhoods was underlined in a report produced for the Office of the Deputy Prime Minister in 2005 (Pain, 2005).

At local level, LA teams and other public agencies have in some cases developed projects targeted at reducing intergenerational tensions (Lancashire County Council, 2004; West Lindsey District Council, 2004; National Youth Agency, 2008). Darlington District Council (n.d.) developed a project involving different age groups working together to consider “intergenerational issues, break down barriers, build relationships and raise issues around stereotyping” (p.1).

The Institute for Public Policy Research, an independent think tank, carried out research on how “the experience of youth in Britain has changed and why this has fuelled public disquiet” (Margo, Dixon, Pearce and Reed, 2006, pp.vn,f79). The report’s recommendations include socialising YP through community-based, intergenerational projects.

IP has also been promoted by charities such as Age Concern and Help the Aged. Age Concern published a booklet with examples of 'best practice' demonstrating how IP was relevant to current key government priorities (Berridge, 2006).

The UK, over the last 10-12 years, has seen a significant growth of focus on intergenerational practice, including the launch of Centres for Intergenerational Practice in England, Wales and Northern Ireland (CIP). Referring to this development, Raynes (2004) remarks that "Intergenerational programmes are beginning to burgeon in England" (p.187). Since September 2008 the CIP in England has been working collaboratively with the National Youth Agency.

The limited research literature published suggests that IP continues to focus on improving intergenerational attitudes and negative age-related stereotyping between older and young generations. However, more recently the CIP has broadened its focus to promote intergenerational practice as a means of improving community cohesion and solidarity (Hatton-Yeo and Batty, 2011). It is argued that "thinking intergenerationally provides a framework or approach to many of the common circumstances that people are seeking to change in their own communities" (Hatton-Yeo, n.d.). As a result of repositioning IP, the focus is not just on the impact its delivery might have on individuals but on neighbourhoods, organisation and communities.

Increasingly IP is being seen as a lens through which to develop interventions to address a variety of social problems; take for example, homelessness. A project being developed in various parts of the country involves encouraging

older residents who live alone to share their home with a younger person who is at risk of becoming homeless (Granville, 2011). Whilst an evaluation is still underway as to its effectiveness, three important aims are to reduce the feeling of isolation that older people can feel as a result of living alone, to give young people a sense of stability in their lives, and to improve intergenerational relationships.

Age is only one of the dimensions that results in negative stereotyping; cultural and social differences can also negatively impact on interpersonal and intergroup relations. There are emerging debates within IP about how intergenerational projects can help to identify additional cross-cutting social issues. As a result some practitioners explicitly factor this in when designing intergenerational projects. For example, in a project designed for sixth form pupils to help older adults obtain a working knowledge of digital communication technology, the aims included “building a stronger sense of community and connectedness between the young and old generations. ... [And also] to enable more connected communities through developing a greater understanding of different cultures and ethnicities in participants” (Granville, 2012, p.25).

The extent of development of IP is reflected in the CIP website, which details a wide range of projects, numbering over 100 in total. Projects include community-building activities such as garden projects, arts-based productions, and curriculum-related work in schools. A recent trawl of the projects revealed that only six specifically referred to tackling youth-related ASB as an objective, one being the Let’s Talk booklet (CIP, 2012). This clearly reflects the need for

more research into IP's development generally and more specifically in relation to tackling ASB.

Intergenerational Practice – Theoretical Framework

Interest in IP began in the United States of America in the 1970s. Initially, the focus was to design programmes aimed at reducing negative perceptions between different age groups. Subsequently, programmes were created with the explicit aim of tackling “increased loneliness, lowered self-esteem, school dropout, drug abuse, violence and inadequate support systems for both populations” (Newman, 2000, p.57). More recently, in Canada, the concepts of ‘intergenerational immersion’ and ‘shared intergenerational space’ have been the focus of project development and research (MacKenzie, Carson and Kuehne, 2011). Briefly, the former relates to the benefits to be gained from projects where the contact between the generations is frequent and sustained. In relation to ‘shared intergenerational space’, as the label suggests, programmes are being developed which bring school pupils and older community members together at a local school. The rationale for this is not only to improve intergenerational relations, but also to address the problem of limited resources. As Carson, Kobayashi and Kuehne (2011) explain:

“[The] demand for quality children and youth services compounded with the increasing need for creative older adult programs creates an environment ripe for innovative age-integrated care incorporating shared site programming. ... [B]ecause many communities face limited resources for construction and rehabilitation of facilities, the use of space by multiple generations makes common sense”. (p.415-6)

Several theories seek to explain the causes of intergenerational tension or negative attitudes. Whilst in her Canadian-based work, Kuehne (2003a)

identifies up to fifteen theories that have provided a framework for intergenerational projects and research, the major ones identified by Pinquart, Wenzel and Sorensen (2000, pp.525-6) are 'realistic intergroup conflict', 'social identity', and 'deficit of intergenerational contact'. The limited UK-based literature has focused mainly on these three theories.

The '**realistic intergroup conflict**' theory argues that negative attitudes, and sometimes conflict, result from different age groups having different goals (Hobman, 1993; Rosenbaum and Button, 1992; Silverstein, Parrott, Angelelli and Cook, 2000; Walker, 1993). An example is the tension between parents and adolescents as the latter seek greater independence (Pinquart, Wenzel and Sorensen, 2000). Perceived unfair allocation of resources such as social housing can become a problem. Young families having to live in small accommodation may resent older adults enjoying larger properties, and consider this to represent inequitable under-occupying of such accommodation (Tinker, 1993). Pain (2005) argues that conflict can be fuelled within communities where the young and older generations are in competition for public space, a THA issue discussed earlier.

According to the '**social identity theory**' (Ashmore, Jussim and Wilder, 2001; Tajfel and Turner, 1979) intergroup conflict arises from negative attitudes which a given group holds about another group. For example adults' (the ingroup's) negative attitude towards adolescents (the outgroup) is driven by adults' lack of acceptance that adolescents are not a homogenous group. The theory holds that the ingroup does not give credit for the fact that the outgroup comprises individuals with differing attitudes and characteristics. Since individuals tend to

hold positive opinions of themselves, they come to regard others in the same group as having similar positive traits. At the same time they negatively stereotype the outgroup (Pinquart, Wenzel and Sorensen, 2000). An example is children applying negative stereotypes to older people (Caspi, 1984).

According to Stangor (2000) social categorisation inevitably occurs in one's interaction with others. Instead of identifying a person as an individual we view them as belonging to a social group based on a specific characteristic. Linked to this process is the formation of stereotypes – mental images of social categories. Positive mental images generate positive stereotyping, whilst negative mental images lead to negative stereotyping; also referred to as prejudice (Stangor, 2000). Allport (1988) defined prejudice as “an aversive or hostile attitude toward a person who belongs to a group, simply because he belongs to that group, and is therefore presumed to have the objectionable qualities ascribed to the group” (p.7).

The negative stereotyping pertinent to my study is the perception by some adults that THA – groups of YP congregating in public places - is a social problem.

Butler in 1969 was the first to employ the term 'ageism' to characterise discrimination against older people, in the context of “open conflict between younger and older generations” (Ng, 1998, p.105). The media using negative language and images at times reinforce negative perceptions of the elderly. Mayes (1999) cites the example of 'wrinkly', a slang word with offensive and negative connotations which now appears in the Concise Oxford Dictionary.

According to Pain (1997) academic work, by failing to adequately examine the issues which contribute to ageism, is complicit in reinforcing “stereotypical and negative images of the ageing process and elderly people’s lives” (pp.117-8).

It can however be argued that negative stereotyping of YP, which has been evident for some time, equally constitutes ageism. Since distinct youth cultures emerged in the 1950’s, as discussed earlier, teenagers have repeatedly been depicted by the news media as a threat to society. These examples of moral panic have occurred as successive generations adopted prevailing youth cultures such as teddy boys in the 1950s, mods and rockers in the 1960s, and hippies, punks, skinheads or ravers in subsequent decades (Furlong and Cartmel, 1997).

The stereotype of YP as being uncommunicative and difficult to deal with has frequently been reinforced by television. There is evidence from research that media coverage of YP has become increasingly negative and stereotypical, and according to a public attitude survey young people are viewed as incapable of respecting society’s values and norms (Margo, Dixon, Pearce and Reed, 2006).

‘Deficit of intergenerational contact theory’ suggests that insufficient social intergroup contact creates or exacerbates negative ageist stereotyping and intergenerational conflict (Pinquart, Wenzel and Sorensen, 2000). The restructuring of the family unit is cited as a reason for lack of intergenerational contact. For example, the rise in divorce rates and increase in single-parent families can adversely affect the direct interaction children have with grandparents (Hatton-Yeo and Ohsako, 2000, p.54; Johnson, 1993, p.17). A

Department for Education and Skills (DfES, 1998) report noted that the increased need for nuclear families to relocate, due to employment demands, has reduced interaction between grandparents and grandchildren. However, a counter-argument is that because many older adults live longer, healthier lives, YP are enjoying quality contact time with their grandparents for a longer time span (Chapman and Neal, 1990). Importantly however, I suggest that the degree to which familial, interpersonal interaction impacts on reducing intergenerational tension at an intergroup level has not been sufficiently researched.

Hagestad and Uhlenberg (2005) attribute lack of contact between age groups to the way social interaction throughout life is divided in industrialised society. They refer to 'age segregation' experienced throughout life, naming three dimensions – institutional, spatial and cultural.

Regarding 'institutional age segregation' they argue that rules instigated by the State, based on age bands, have reduced intergenerational interaction. They suggest that:

“Children and youth are channelled into daycare and schools with a narrow band of age peers. For adults, days are anchored in work settings that exclude the young and old. And the older people, who have limited access to school and work sites, are expected to live retired lives of leisure”.
(Hagestad and Uhlenberg, 2005, p.346)

They propose that institutional age segregation encourages spatial and cultural age segregation. A similar point is made by Hatton-Yeo and Ohsako (2000,

p.54) regarding the raising of the school leaving age and the reduction in 'apprenticeships and trade guilds'.

Spatial age segregation is contextualised in three different ways – household, neighbourhood, and activity spaces (outside the home). Family/household issues are discussed above. Neighbourhood age segregation is attributed to age specific accommodation (Hagestad and Uhlenberg, 2005; Pettigrew, 2008b). The third spatial context is the space where routine daily activities take place, for example many, although not all, recreational activities are age specific. A report by Granville and Ellis (1999) endorsed this view of age-specific activities

Discussing 'cultural age segregation', Hagestad and Uhlenberg (2005) cite similar causal links to those in the 'social identity theory'. Examples are language that perpetuates negative stereotyping, and media influence in reinforcing prejudice. They also cite development in technology and communication, such as mobile phones and the internet. Whilst YP find it relatively easy to keep pace, this is less the case for older adults, who may feel excluded from social interaction.

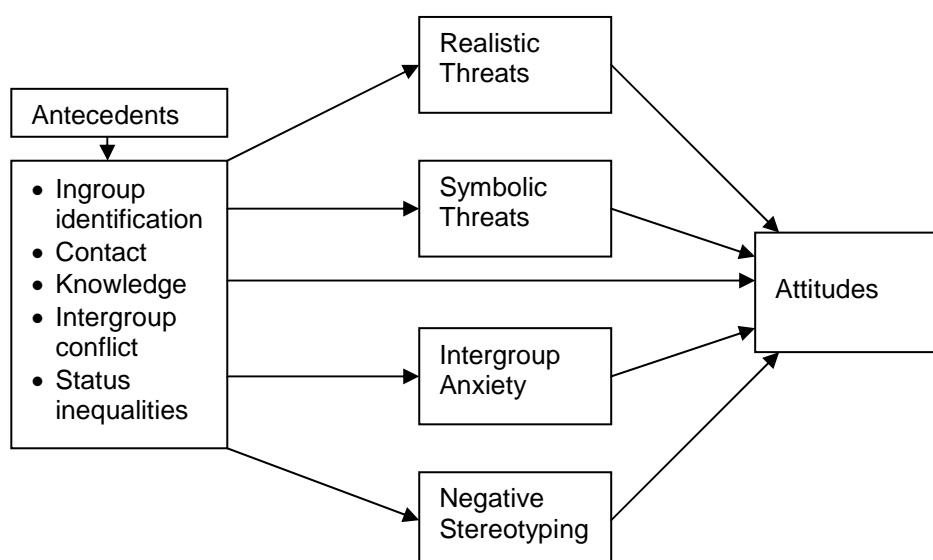
In talking about this disconnection between the old and young, Waiton (2001) refers to Furedi's and Brown's (1997) research commenting on the older generation's sense of vulnerability and isolation. Waiton (2001) observed:

"The key factor ... was isolation from social and family networks. An isolation made worse by a feeling that many elderly people felt that they were out of touch with an increasingly unfamiliar world inherited by young people. [F]or many elderly adults a lack of confidence had developed that made them feel unable to

negotiate relationship with children and young people”. (Waiton, 2001, p.135)

From my review of the literature related to intergroup conflict and tensions, I identified the **integrated threat theory** (ITT) as potentially providing a robust framework within which to analyse the causes of tensions associated with ASB. Stephan and Renfro (2002) argue there is a close relationship between threats and prejudice, attributing to their research “a new appreciation of the role that threat plays in intergroup relations” (p.191). In the early version of a theoretical model for ITT comprising the antecedents to threat, four types of threat leading to negative attitudes are shown in Figure 3.1.

Figure 3.1: Integrated Threat Theory - original threat model



Source: Stephan and Renfro, 2002, p.193.

In conceptualising ‘threat’ they distinguished realistic threat from symbolic threat. The former related to any threat to the physical or material welfare of a group by another group, and encompassed a broader range of threats than the realistic intergroup conflict theory:

“The concept of realistic threats employed in the integrated threat theory differs from the idea of realistic group conflict in that realistic threats incorporate a broader focus than the realistic group conflict. Realistic threats include any threat to the welfare of the group or its members, not just competition for scarce resources”. (Stephan and Renfro, 2002, pp.192-3)

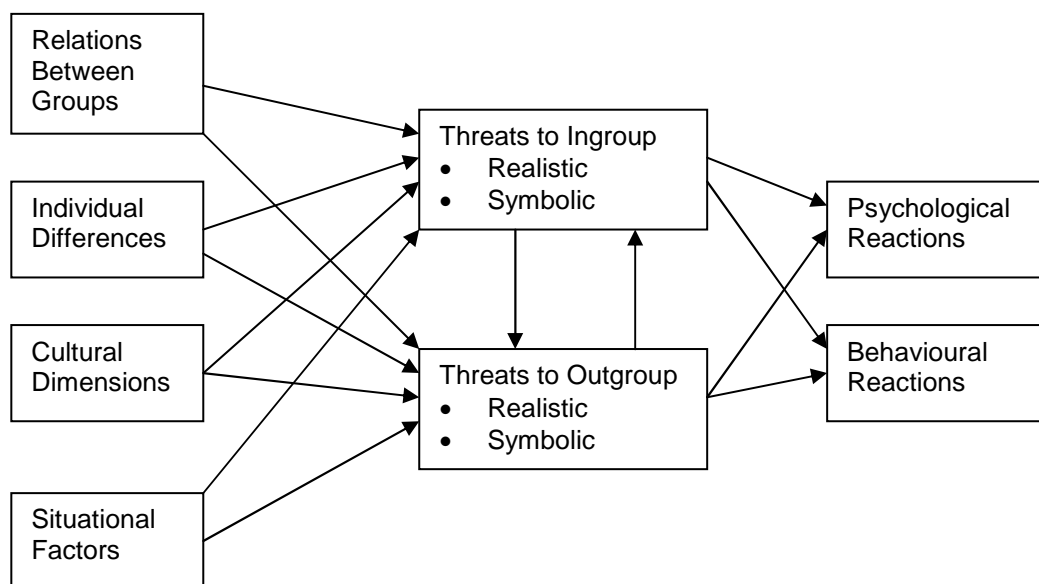
Symbolic threat refers to threats to an ingroup's values, beliefs or culture which are perceived to be different to that of an outgroup (Stephan and Renfro, 2002). Intergroup anxiety acknowledges that anticipating negative outcomes from an intergroup interaction can induce threat. Anticipated negative outcomes are categorised as 'psychological outcomes' (for example, embarrassment), 'negative behavioural outcomes' (for example, physical harm), 'negative evaluations by the outgroup member', and 'negative evaluations by ingroup members' (Stephan and Renfro, 2002). Experiencing anxiety can heighten one's prejudice towards outgroup members and impede positive intergroup or interpersonal interaction. The inclusion of intergroup anxiety in ITT reflects the work of Gudykunst (2004) relating to anxiety/uncertainty management theory on which sections of the Let's Talk booklet draw.

Stephan and Renfro (2002) conceptualised negative stereotyping as the fourth category of threat. They stated that the process of stereotyping serves “to simplify a complex world, provide guidelines for social interactions, furnish explanations for the behaviour of outgroups and are used to justify the superiority of the ingroup and enhance self-esteem” (p.194). They further explained that negative stereotypes lead ingroup members to anticipate interactions with outgroup members being negative and therefore a threat to them. As Figure 3.2 shows, the model was later reconfigured and intergroup,

and negative stereotyping were excluded as threats. More recently Curşeu, Stoop and Schalk (2007) argued that negative stereotyping is better conceptualised as a 'mediator variable between the antecedents' which they identified as symbolic threats, contact (quality and quantity), intergroup anxiety and realistic threats, and the resultant prejudice or social distance.

Stephan and Renfro (2002) went on to redefine the concept of threat, acknowledging that both realistic and symbolic threat can be experienced at either individual or group level, see Figure 3.2 below.

Figure 3.2: Integrated Threat Theory - revised threat model



Source: Stephan and Renfro, 2002, p.197.

The conceptualisation of realistic and symbolic threats in this revised version is still relevant at the group level. Realistic individual threats relate to 'actual physical or material harm to the individual'. Symbolic individual threats include

concepts such as 'loss of face or honour, and undermining self-identity or self-esteem'.

Stephan and Renfro (2002) also revised the classification of antecedents and identified four domains of antecedents to threat; the first being 'relations between group's' such as intergroup conflict, status inequalities, and the size of the outgroup compared with the ingroup. Secondly, the theory identifies various 'individual difference variables' as precursors to threat, including social identification which it is argued can significantly influence the level of perceived threat. Where individuals connect strongly with the beliefs, values and way of life of the ingroup, they are more prone to believing members of the outgroup pose a threat. Other antecedents to threat within this category, also significant in the Intergroup Contact Theory discussed later, include negative intergroup contact, disparity of status between the ingroup and outgroup, and a lack of understanding the outgroup (Stephan and Renfro, 2002). The four antecedents mentioned above within this category formed part of the early theoretical framework, but in the desire to make the theory more robust Stephan and Renfro (2002) identified further variables which they felt might also be important. .

Accordingly Stephan and Renfro (2002) also suggest that cultural dimensions, such as a strong collectivist rather than individualistic ideology, might also act as antecedents to threats. Anyone who rebuffs the dominant beliefs and values of a culture may be perceived as a threat. The final classification of antecedents Stephan and Renfro (2002) propose comes under the heading of 'situational factors'. This heading includes a wide range of variables, but examples again include some variables drawn from the ICT.

A more detailed discussion of antecedents I consider relevant to my findings will be undertaken in Chapter 9. However it should be noted here that whilst each of the antecedents described above can result in realistic/symbolic threats, the degree to which one is more influential than the others is still debated (Bizman and Yinon, 2001; Curşeu, Stoop and Schalk, 2007; González, Verkuyten, Weesie and Poppe, 2008; Tausch, *et al*, 2007; Ward and Masgoret, 2006).

Stephan and Renfro (2002) highlight their belief that threats stemming from these antecedents can be interpreted as being directed at an individual or a group. The way intergroup relations are construed within a given context is likely to affect the extent to which different threats are salient within that context. They suggest four forms of intergroup relations; firstly group-to-group with multiple members of each group interacting. The second form is group-to-individual involving multiple members of the ingroup interacting with a single member of the outgroup. Individual-to-group involves individual members of the ingroup interacting with multiple members of the outgroup. Finally the fourth form, individual-to-individual, involves interaction between individual members of the ingroup and outgroup. In individual-to-group and individual-to-individual situations, only if the individual's ingroup identity rather than personal identity is the more salient to them can the relation be construed as an intergroup relation. Stephen's and Renfro's (2002) ITT model identified various consequences of threat going beyond the original narrow focus on prejudice, including conflict, mistrust, fear, anger, and negative impact on intergroup communications. These consequences are classified as involving either psychological or behavioural reactions; the former comprising cognitive and emotional reactions. However, Stephan and Renfro (2002) again highlight that how intergroup

relations are construed, as described above, can affect psychological and behavioural responses. For example, individual-group and group-group threats can cognitively alter the way the outgroup is stereotyped by the ingroup; or emotional reactions such as anger or resentment may be outwardly directed at the outgroup. Particularly where relations are construed as individual-group, it is argued that emotional reactions are more likely to be inward than outward. Behavioural responses include, for example, 'withdrawal, submission, negotiation or aggression'. Also, whereas threats at group level are likely to induce a unified group response, threats directed at individual level will possibly evoke an individualistic reaction.

The important point is made that consequences of threat and psychological/behavioural responses can become cyclical, "for instance, if people respond behaviourally to threats by acting aggressively towards outgroup members, this aggression will become a component of prior intergroup conflict and prior negative contact that will affect future perceptions of threat" (Stephan and Renfro, 2002, p.203).

ITT, drawing on the Intergroup Contact Theory discussed in the next section, posits that threat reduces with better ingroup members' knowledge of the outgroup. Equally, the frequency and nature of contact between the ingroup and outgroup can influence the level of threat felt; it is argued that repeated positive contact can reduce the ingroup's perception of the threat posed by the outgroup.

Research using ITT as a theoretical framework has focused on intergroup tensions related to, for example, immigration (Bizman and Yinon, 2001; Curşeu,

Stoop and Schalk, 2007; Ward and Masgoret, 2006), sectarian conflict (Tausch, et al., 2007), religion (González, Verkuyten, Weesie and Poppe, 2008) and racial relations (Stephan, et al., 2002). However, to my knowledge, it has not been used in research into intergenerational tensions generally or specifically in relation to adults' negative perceptions of THA. Using ITT as a framework to analyse tensions associated with ASB and THA represents a contribution to existing research findings.

Intergenerational Project Models/Designs – Theoretical Framework

Intergroup Contact Theory

In the past, the design of intergenerational programmes drew on the Intergroup Contact Theory (ICT) to provide a theoretical framework (Caspi, 1984). Whilst this has not been acknowledged explicitly for UK-based projects, I would suggest that many have in fact used ICT. More recent literature frequently refers to the need for, and the benefits of, projects that facilitate face-to-face contact to break down intergenerational tensions (Beth Johnson Foundation, 2009; Graham, 2011; Hatton-Yeo, 2006; Sanchez, et al., 2007).

The early work on ICT is usually traced back to the work of Allport, 1954, although as Dovidio, Gaertner and Kawakami (2003) acknowledge, an earlier body of work preceded his studies. Central to the theory was the notion that prejudice and discrimination between different social groups could be reduced by facilitating intergroup interaction (Allport, 1954; Amir, 1969; Hewstone, 2003; Pettigrew, 1997, 1998). Early in the theory's development the focus was primarily on racial tensions, but subsequently this expanded to prejudice experienced by social groups based, for example, on sexual orientation, mental

health, and religion (Dovidio, Gaertner and Kawakami, 2003). Indeed, Pettigrew's and Tropp's (2006) meta-analysis test of the ICT argues that "the intergroup contact theory now stands as a general social psychological theory and not as a theory designed simply for the special case of racial and ethnic contact" (p.768).

Allport claimed that for intergroup contact to succeed four conditions were required within a contact scenario (Hewstone, 2003; Hewstone and Brown, 1986; Pettigrew, 1997, 1998, 2008a; Pettigrew and Tropp, 2006). Firstly, recruits to a programme should have equal status, which should be sustained throughout. Chapman and Neal (1990) advance a similar argument, namely that a positive impact on attitudes is more likely to occur if 'socioeconomic status' is common across the groups. They further argue that there is much more likelihood of a successful outcome when "the social climate favours group contact, when contact is pleasant and at an intimate level, and when the groups interact in functionally important activities" (Chapman and Neal, 1990, p.826). According to some American studies (Fox and Giles, 1993, pp.423-451; Pinquart, Wenzel and Sorensen, 2000, p.526) negative attitudes were more likely to occur in intergenerational projects that were poorly designed or where a power imbalance existed between the groups; Hewstone and Brown (1986) advanced a similar case. Margo, Dixon, Pearce and Reed (2006) argue differently; they supported IP, but see a hierarchical structure, based on adult authority, as a prerequisite.

Allport's (1954) second optimal condition was that programmes should be designed around the different groups establishing common goals; thirdly, this

should be within a cooperative rather than competitive environment. The fourth condition was the need for the support of authorities and institutions. Whilst Allport (1954) argued that these four conditions were essential, subsequent research suggests that their presence is desirable but not essential for a positive outcome. Pettigrew and Tropp (2006) conclude that the four conditions “act as facilitating conditions that enhance the tendency for positive contact outcomes to emerge” (p.766). They further argue that familiarity resulting from contact, leading to the liking of others, is key to reducing prejudice, and that this has been found to occur under different conditions and within a wide range of settings.

Re-thinking the importance of Allport’s (1954) optimal conditions led to research focusing on how rather than when contact reduces prejudice and intergroup tension (Hewstone, 2003). Many mediators of tension have been identified; the three most researched were the focus of a meta-analysis test by Pettigrew and Tropp (2008). These are “enhancing knowledge about the outgroup, reducing anxiety about outgroup contact, and increasing empathy and perspective taking” (p.922).

For the first mediator it is suggested that intergroup contact allows individuals to acquire new knowledge of outgroup members (Pettigrew and Tropp, 2008). Dovidio, Gaertner and Kawakami (2003) state that increased cognition of others serves to improve intergroup relations in different ways. Firstly, it enables people to perceive others in an individualistic, non-stereotypical way. In turn, this can reduce one’s reluctance to interact with others, as can increased knowledge of discrimination or bias that others have experienced. Turning to

the second mediator, Turner, Hewstone and Voci (2007) argue that an individual having negative expectations of an encounter with an outgroup member induces a feeling of anxiety. Such an emotional response deters individuals from becoming involved in intergroup interaction which impedes the possibility of reducing intergroup tensions (Dovidio, Gaertner and Kawakami, 2003). According to Pettigrew and Tropp (2006) research findings suggest that facilitating positive “contact can reduce feelings of threat and anxiety about future cross-group interactions” (p.767). This claim is supported by Stephan, Stephan and Gudykunst (1999) and Gudykunst (2004) who argue that anxiety caused by uncertainty of how the other party might react can negatively affect intergroup communication. It is suggested that by providing the skills to overcome anxiety and uncertainty, intergroup communication can be enhanced, contact is more productive and consequently intergroup relations improve. This clearly suggests that the design of intergroup contact projects must seek to minimise affective factors such as anxiety and uncertainty. Insufficient knowledge exists however about overcoming negative age-based stereotyping and improving intergenerational communication through this approach.

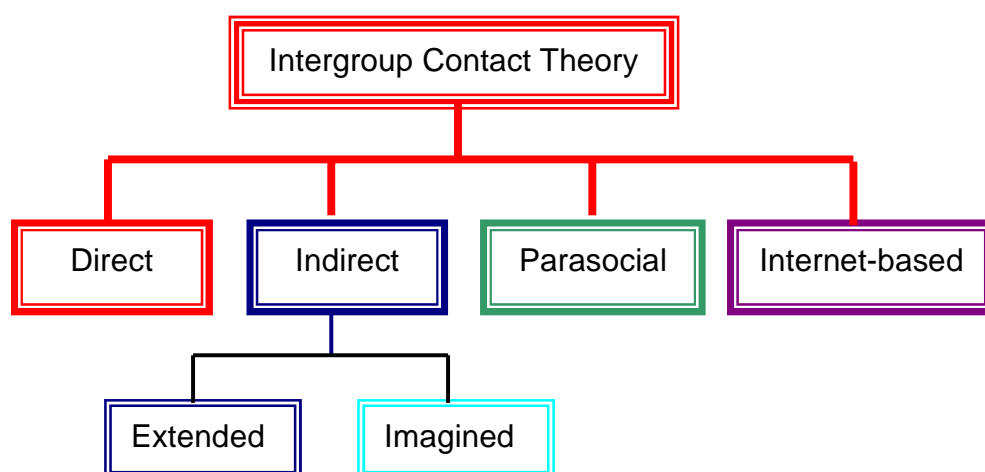
Grouped together as the third main mediator identified by Pettigrew and Tropp (2008) are enhanced empathy and perspective taking. Perspective taking involves the affective process of trying to imagine oneself experiencing the same situation as another; this includes attempting to adopt the other’s viewpoint and experience their emotions within a given set of circumstances. Research suggests that adopting a different perspective can be enabled by diminishing perceived differences between the two parties, thereby facilitating empathy. With intergroup prejudice, aiding ingroup members to take the

perspective of the stigmatised outgroup can decrease negative attitudes and improve intergroup contact (Batson, and Ahmad, 2009; Batson, Early and Salvarani, 1997; Batson, Polycarpou, Harmon-Jones and Imhoff 1997; Dovidio, Gaertner and Kawakami, 2003; Galinsky and Moskowitz, 2000; Stephan and Finlay, 1999; Vescio, Sechrist and Paolucci, 2003; Weyant, 2007). Perspective taking and empathy are mediators particularly relevant to a model of the ICT which is attracting increased attention, namely the imagined intergroup contact (IIC) model referred to later in the next section.

Intergroup Contact Models

Having discussed the conditions required for, and the mediators involved in intergroup contact, I now address models through which contact can be undertaken, as shown in Figure 3.3.

Figure 3.3: Typology of Contact Models within the Intergroup Contact Theory



The longest standing variant is the **direct model**, where members of different groups have face to face contact; IP generally uses this model. Newman (2000) identified three design variations within the direct model. The first

comprises bringing older adult volunteers into a mainstream setting, such as a school, to work with either disaffected or talented YP to help them developmentally, socially or educationally. In the second design YP go into, for example, residential homes to help and befriend older adults who feel marginalised or possibly disconnected from society. The third design aims to bring the two age groups together to work collaboratively on a community-based project to produce mutually beneficial outcomes. Although the three approaches differ significantly, their shared aim is to tackle various intergenerational tensions associated with the social identity and deficit of contact theories.

A second model shown in Figure 3.3 is the **indirect model** which can be further divided into **extended** and **imagined** contact. Wright, Aron, McLaughlin-Volpe and Ropp (1997) introduce the proposition that **extended contact** can successfully reduce intergroup prejudice. Their argument is that being aware that one's close friend has a positive relationship or friendship with an outgroup member can potentially improve one's own attitudes towards the latter. Although further research is needed, positive effects of indirect contact are identified. For example, the knowledge that ingroup friends had outgroup friends reduces an individual's intergroup anxiety, helping to reduce prejudiced attitudes, which is then generalised towards other outgroup members (Pettigrew, Christ, Wagner and Stellmacher, 2007). Turner, Hewstone, Voci and Vonofakou, (2008) consider that the extended model is a pragmatic and effective solution to intergroup prejudice when direct contact is not possible. Adding to the early study of the indirect (extended) contact model Pettigrew, Christ, Wagner and Stellmacher (2007) conclude that:

“Having ingroup friends who have outgroup friends is negatively related to prejudice. Indeed, the effect approaches in size that of direct intergroup contact. Carrying this work further, our findings demonstrate that direct and indirect contact are closely intertwined. The results indicate that the two forms of contact are highly intercorrelated, share similar social locations and personality predictors, and together enhance the prediction of prejudice”. (Pettigrew, Christ, Wagner and Stellmacher, 2007, p.421)

Another indirect contact model variation is **‘imagined intergroup contact’** (IIC).

Although research can be traced back to Anderson (1983) and Zagacki, et al. (1992), there has been a resurgence of interest recently, continuing throughout my studies (for example, Blair, Ma and Lenton, 2001; Crisp’s, Stathi’s, Turner’s and Husnu, 2009; Crisp and Turner, 2009; Dovidio, Eller and Hewstone, 2011; Harwood, 2010; Husnu and Crisp, 2010a, 2010b; Stathi and Crisp, 2008; Turner and Crisp, 2010; Turner, Crisp and Lambert, 2007). Imagined contact combines findings from studies into direct and extended contact with knowledge of how mental simulation impacts on social behaviour. By creating mental imagery of a scenario within a given social context, cognitive and behavioural effects similar to a lived experience occur. Simulation of positive social encounters with outgroup members has also been found to reduce intergroup anxiety, in turn reducing prejudice (Turner, Crisp and Lambert, 2007). Having eliminated other potential causal factors for the improved outgroup attitudes, such as ‘informational load’, ‘stereotype priming’, ‘positive affective priming’ and ‘non-relevant social interaction’, it has been concluded that it is “uniquely, the mental simulation of positively toned intergroup contact that improves intergroup attitudes in these studies” (Husnu and Crisp, 2010a, pp.943-4). However, a word of caution is needed. It is suggested that the IIC model is unlikely to have as strong an effect as direct contact, the latter being considered to influence

positive attitude formation and prejudice reduction more strongly. Therefore the recommendation is that IIC can be used to good effect in a staged process; that is in the early stages of intergroup work where, because of high levels of anxiety, attempting direct contact is inappropriate. It is suggested that IIC's particular strength is as a stepping stone to future face to face contact (Husnu and Crisp, 2010a).

Two other models of contact also feature in Figure 3.3; **parasocial** (Dovidio, Eller and Hewstone, 2011; Harwood, 2010; Schiappa, Gregg and Hewes, 2005) and **internet-based** (Amichai-Hamburger and McKenna, 2006). Being peripheral to my thesis I mention them only briefly. In **parasocial** contact, a uni-directional encounter is facilitated through television viewing; the premise being that frequent viewing of positive images of an otherwise stigmatised group can reduce prejudice. There is acknowledgement that viewers can separate fictitious from non-fictitious characters, but frequently "while watching television or a movie we do not make the effort to do so" (Schiappa, Gregg and Hewes, 2005, p.95).

It is suggested that internet technology can provide an effective medium for interaction in various forms; via text, text and image, video and audio, and remote face to face interaction. Whilst the research into its viability as an effective means of reducing intergroup prejudice is still in its infancy, it is argued that the nature of it addresses some of the optimal conditions and barriers to interaction referred to earlier, such as "creating a secure environment, reducing anxiety, cutting geographical distances, significantly lowering costs, and by

creating equal status, intimate contact and cooperation” (Amichai-Hamburger and McKenna, 2006, p.12).

Returning to the IIC model, research has concentrated on quasi-experimental settings in which the simulation is carried out by participants being encouraged to imagine a typical scenario, such as an encounter with a negatively perceived outgroup member, from a different ethnic group perhaps. Participants are encouraged to imagine a positive situation such as having a pleasant chat with the other person about everyday or family matters. This is designed to enable participants to change their view of the outgroup member (Blair, Ma and Lenton, 2001; Dovidio, Gaertner and Kawakami, 2003; Husnu and Crisp, 2010a, 2010b; Stathi and Crisp, 2008, 2011; Turner, Crisp and Lambert, 2007).

As explained in Chapter 1, my research explores a new derivative of the Imagined Intergroup Contact model using a different setting and a different approach to simulation. The setting is real-life situations involving existing community tensions, working with residents who have complained about ASB. The approach to simulation is to use a booklet which depicts in story-book fashion a typical situation such as might have been encountered by the participant, and then illustrate different scenarios which could result from different responses to the situation. Potential advantages are conveying the scenario through both visual imagery and text, and using situations with which the user can identify. A similar method is being used in schools in an attempt to reduce their negative stereotyping of peers who, for example, are from a different ethnic minority or have a disability (Cameron and Rutland, 2006; Cameron, et al., 2006; Cameron, et al., 2011). Over a period of weeks children

are read stories which depict children similar to themselves having positive interaction with children belonging to an outgroup. In the case of prejudice against disabled children, conclusions drawn were that “extended contact led to increased positivity toward disabled [and it was felt that this model could be] used with young children in contexts in which the opportunity for direct contact is low” (Cameron and Rutland, 2006, p.469). My research builds on this approach by using the IIC model to tackle intergenerational attitudes associated with ASB, and in a non-institutional setting.

Examples and Limitations of Existing Intergenerational Practice-related Research

Although the number of intergenerational projects has grown significantly since I first became involved, the volume of literature remains relatively limited compared with other types of intergroup contact research. What exists mainly comes from outside the UK and whilst this raises the question of the generalisability (Bryman, 2004; Silverman, 2006, 2011; Yin, 2011) of overseas research findings to the UK, its inclusion provides useful insight into IP.

Therefore, the following section also cites USA sources for examples of both completed intergenerational projects and knowledge gaps. Caspi (1984) concedes that various factors limit definite conclusions being drawn from school based research, especially the absence of allowance being made for a number of variables in analysis of data including cognitive skills, social class, and variation in curriculum content and literary resources available.

Chapman and Neal (1990) scrutinised various intergenerational projects but found no ‘consistent’ evidence that such projects had improved the younger

generation's attitudes towards older people. They also found no evidence of projects focusing on changing the attitudes of the elderly toward youth.

Fox and Giles (1993) point to the lack of methodological robustness and linkage to theory of research into the effectiveness of IP in offsetting negative stereotyping. Further, rather than including the effects on older adults, programmes had focused only on the effects on the younger generation. They contend also that the nature and quality of contacts between the generations were given insufficient attention: "a weakness of all intergenerational contact research as well as intergroup contact theory in general, is a failure to look at the actual communicative processes occurring in the contact situation" (Fox and Giles, 1993: p.439).

The type of communication used can, according to Fox and Giles (1993), significantly affect both the quality and outcome of interpersonal contact. They draw on the Communication Accommodation Theory (CAT), which holds that an individual has to change his or her manner of speech depending on the context of the interaction and the other person's characteristics. For example, an adolescent talking teenage slang to an elderly person has more chance of being misunderstood than if using more standard speech; in the latter case, positive interaction is more likely.

Edwards and Giles (1993) also considered the Communication Predicament of Ageing model (CPA), developed from CAT. CPA holds that if someone makes changes to their normal style of communication to meet the apparent needs of an interlocutor, such an accommodation in practice risks turning out to be patronising or unnecessary, adversely affecting the quality of interaction (Soliz

and Harwood, 2003). Cases in point would include a young person shouting because they assume that elderly people are hard of hearing, or an older person oversimplifying because they assume that YP have a very limited vocabulary.

Several UK academics and practitioners have called for further research to support the development of intergenerational programmes. Bernard (2006) underlines the need to test existing theories and to research fresh theoretical approaches. Kuehne (2003a) proposes that numerous theories are capable of being “applied to intergenerational programme development, research and evaluation” (p.157). She argues for both theoretical research and programme evaluation to build a diversity of literature leading to “better use of the theories and conceptual frameworks” (Kuehne, 2003b, p.147). Raynes (2004) echoes Kuehne’s (2003a, 2003b) arguments, stating that although research based in other countries can (if account is taken of its context) be valuable, UK-based research is also needed.

Turning to intergenerational projects, the focus in early UK work was limited to the relationship between two generational groups. More recently there have been calls for research on projects involving a multi-generational framework, and more consideration of the facilitator’s role (Moore and Statham, 2006; Springate, Atkinson and Martin, 2008). These criticisms have been noted within Intergenerational Practice, and the need to address them in project development is being highlighted (Beth Johnson Foundation, 2011; Granville, 2011).

Granville (2002) underlines the importance of preparatory activities being carried out separately with each group; gaining their understanding of the desired outcome and their support for the programme will more likely lead to the success of programmes designed to generate mutual respect.

Governance – Informal Social Control

Critiques of New Labour's policies described in Chapter 2 argue that enlisting the public's help has met with limited success. Research undertaken by the Institute for Public Policy Research found that, as a nation, British residents are reluctant to intervene in cases of ASB (Margo, Dixon, Pearce and Reed, 2006). Millie's (2009) data reveals that the fear of reprisal by the offender or associates may deter informal control.

As discussed earlier, Waiton (2008a) and later Hodgkinson and Tilley (2011) argue that the introduction of a raft of enforcement policies result in the public stepping back from any responsibility to intervene; the experience reported by the Borough Council and Safer Neighbourhood Team reinforced this. Burney (2009) adds that policy under the 1990s Conservative government has already had an influence. For example, the Citizen's Charter (Major, 1991), together with subsequent emphasis on choice and standards in public services, led to a citizen-consumer relationship between government and public. She argues that: "service providers are increasingly expected to deal with problems that, before, might either have been ignored or dealt with between those involved" (Burney, 2009, p.89). Bannister and Kearns (2009) talk about "social groups retreating from engagement with others in the public realm" (p.184).

Atkinson and Flint (2004); Gilchrist (2009); Harris, (2006); Mackenzie, et al. (2010); Skinns (2007) advocate informal control but consider it more likely to occur in neighbourhoods enjoying a sense of connectedness. Mackenzie, et al. (2010) suggest that where communities are fragmented the willingness to exercise informal social control is missing. Flint (2002) reinforces this notion in research involving Housing Association Officers; one felt that the lack of connectedness between residents meant that informal social control was less prevalent:

“In stable parts of the estate, where folk know each other, there tends to be more acceptance of young people, people will also control kids they know well. However when they don’t know the kids people contact agencies and this happens most in the areas of the estate with the highest turnover”. (Flint, 2002, p.633)

The above comment was reinforced in research findings cited in Barnes (2006). Harris (2006) suggests that in neighbourhoods with significant heterogeneity of norms and values, residents may find it difficult to establish any commonality, which may impact negatively on willingness to intervene. Homogeneous neighbourhoods may however become insular and unreceptive to changes in the status quo. He argues that where there is equilibrium between homogeneity and heterogeneity neighbourhood relations are more likely to be positive, and individuals more willing to intervene to curb bad behaviour.

Flint (2008) argues that social dynamics are important factors. He refers to the “complexity of their relationship to their neighbourhood, ethnicity or other elements of identity” (p.263); factors which he argues reduce the likelihood of people undertaking informal social control.

The BC and SNT personnel I worked with sought to reverse the trend in reduced informal social control, particularly regarding complaints about low level ASB not serious enough to warrant their intervention. This sentiment appears to be shared more widely. For example, although not specifically relating to YP, Flint's (2002) research found that low to medium level behaviour amongst neighbours is a prevalent subject of complaints. A community police officer considered that "some intervention by us is required but often incidents are trivial and should be resolved between neighbours" (Flint, 2002, p.632).

There is academic support for low level youth-related ASB problems being resolved through informal social control. Waiton's (2001) views have already been expressed in Chapter 2. He argues that adults playing a part in policing YP's behaviour as beneficial on two counts. Firstly, the interaction involved can have an important and beneficial impact on YP's socialisation process. Equally, informal social control can improve the relationship between young and old, giving adults a greater sense of self-worth and reducing negative perceptions of the young and associated fears of crime. Moore and Statham (2006), whilst being aware of the care with which projects need to be designed, for example the possible need for third party mediation, support Waiton's (2001) argument by suggesting that "intergenerational relationships suffer because adults are increasingly relying on police and other agents to control the action of young, rather than, as in the past, playing an active role themselves in teaching the young what is socially acceptable" (Moore and Statham, 2006, p.472).

Mackenzie, et al. (2010) suggest that approaches involving mediation and interpersonal interaction could be used to reduce negative perceptions of others' behaviour. In a similar vein to earlier discussion of Intergroup Contact Theory, they recommend intergroup or interpersonal contact as a vehicle for raising empathy and encouraging alternative perspective taking with a view to benefiting community cohesion.

However, Somerville (2011) argues that for the public to be prepared to exercise informal social control several factors are pertinent. A witness feels better placed to intervene when he or she knows the perpetrator, when the incident occurs locally, where the agencies are considered "responsive, effective, supportive or trustworthy" (p.207), and where the witness believes he or she has a responsibility or duty to act and/or believes this will be of value.

Summary

Recently intergenerational programmes have been advocated by government and non-governmental organisations as a response to intergenerational dislocation generally, to help regenerate neighbourhoods, to help socialise YP, and to increase older adults' sense of self-worth. This is supported by the continued development of intergenerational programmes guided by the CIP.

Projects are based on the premise that facilitating contact between the different age groups can reduce negative intergenerational perceptions and stereotyping. Predominantly, the direct contact model has been central to research and evaluation activity. Optimal, though not essential, conditions are participants having equal status, having common goals within a cooperative rather than

competitive environment, and having institutional support. However, the direct model is not always the most suitable. Individuals feel anxious about directly interacting with those towards whom they feel animosity. Research is accordingly developing on the efficacy of additional models.

With regard to ASB, discussed in Chapter 2, a significant percentage of BCS/CSEW respondents perceive THA as a very/fairly big problem. Theories suggest that intergenerational tension occurs for various reasons, some linked to adults' disquiet about THA; for example, contested space, negative stereotyping and lack of intergenerational contact. Adults are reluctant to intervene for various reasons, some relating to government policy and some to concerns for their own safety.

The research underpinning my thesis uses a pilot project to explore the appropriateness of an intergenerational project, based on the ICT, to address perceived problems of THA. However, the direct contact model has potential inherent difficulties. I decided to develop a new approach drawing on the IIC model, thereby contributing to the existing, limited research on this model. A detailed methodological discussion of my research is undertaken in Chapter 4.

Chapter 4

Methodology

My aim in this chapter is to provide a comprehensive commentary on, and justification for the methodological choices made throughout the research process. Firstly, I discuss my rationale for using a social constructionist paradigm and a case study approach. Subsequent to considering ethical issues, my focus turns to the research methods used, including sample, various research instruments, data analysis and coding strategy, and concluding with a consideration of research quality.

Philosophical Underpinning

As stated earlier, my thesis relates to the piloting of the implementation of the Let's Talk booklet. Teijlingen and Hundley (2001) identify two reasons for conducting pilots in research. One is to test out instruments prior to research going 'live'. The other relates to conducting "a small scale version[s], or trial run[s], done in preparation for the major study" (Polit, Beck and Hungler, 2001 cited in Teijlingen and Hundley, 2001, p.1). My research relates most closely to the latter. Although pilots can be large scale studies, my research involves relatively small numbers of respondents, and seeks to generate a "wealth of data on a small number of individuals" (Hyde, 2000: p.84) with a view to elaborating on the specific. This approach sits more comfortably with a constructionist than positivist paradigm; more specifically, a social constructionist paradigm (Burr 1995; Gergen and Gergen 2003; Gergen 2009) as discussed below.

The choice of a social constructionist paradigm, following an inductive mode of enquiry, was influenced particularly by the literature on ASB discussed in Chapter 2. The positivist paradigm holds that the real world in which we live exists independently of our lived experience of it. In contrast the constructionist paradigm believes that there are multiple perceptions of the world, and appreciates that different people can perceive the same thing differently (Moses and Knutsen, 2007). More specifically, as a mode of enquiry Gergen (2003) explains social constructionism as “principally concerned with explicating the processes by which people come to describe, explain, or otherwise account for the world (including themselves) in which they live” (p.15).

To further justify my rationale for this choice I use the four assumptions listed by Burr (1995, pp.3-5), which I now discuss. Burr (1995) explains that social constructionism dictates that we adopt a “critical stance towards taken-for-granted knowledge” (p.3). It is important that rather than taking knowledge at face value as being based on objective, value-free information, we examine it critically. The BCS provides some knowledge of the nature of ASB, but from a social constructionist stance this is only one version of the truth and cannot with any certainty be generalised as representing the perceptions of my research participants. It was therefore important to collect data reflecting how they construed the term ‘anti-social behaviour’.

Seeking to generalise findings, positivist-based research is often carried out in controlled settings, affording less importance to the research context. This approach fails to provide rich, detailed data both about and from the participants and about the research setting (Sarantakos, 2005). In contrast, social

constructionism emphasises “historical and cultural specificity” (Burr, 1995, p.3); the way we see the world and apprehend that the “categories and concepts we use” (p.3) are influenced by previous social history and the characteristics of our lived environment. Culture is not a static concept and is shaped by prevalent social, economic and political influences. A way to capture these dynamics is to undertake research in a natural setting, building an appreciation of the cultural context. Moreover, a research parameter agreed with the funders was a focus on specific locations with ASB-related, intergenerational problems. My data collection strategy reflected these factors, as explained later in this chapter.

Outlining the generally accepted basic characteristics of social constructionism, Burr (1995, p.4) argues that “knowledge is sustained by social process”. Rather than apprehending the ‘nature of the world’ as a single, given reality, people construct it by socially interacting with one another, making their own reality within the context of those interactions. Symbols, including language, gestures, and current discourse are important to the interaction process. Discourse used by institutions such as the government is also important, and how individuals’ interaction with this shapes their ‘reality’. In Chapter 2 I considered how these different factors impacted the social construction of ‘youth’, resonating with the discussion on historical and cultural specificity above. Using the social constructionist approach made it important to understand research participants’ conceptualisation of THA, which I also examine in Chapter 5.

The fourth assumption that Burr (1995) lists relevant to a social constructionist paradigm is that “knowledge and social action go together” (p.5). Phenomena can be explained and understood in different ways; therefore different solutions

can be promoted to address them. The Let's Talk booklet adopts the premise that there are different ways of interpreting and perceiving the behaviour of teenagers hanging around, and different solutions to addressing the ensuing negative intergenerational relations.

Associated with positivism is a deductive research approach focusing on hypothesis testing (Bryman, 2004). Based on specific theories, hypotheses are developed which are then confirmed or contradicted by data collection and analysis (Carr 1994; Grix, 2004; Hyde, 2000). Quantitative methods are primarily, although not exclusively, associated with a deductive approach (Davies, 2000).

According to Sarantakos (1998) however, a quantitative approach does not adequately provide a deep insight into a given phenomenon's meaning. Also, although quantitative research aims at objectivity, the use of structured, closed-ended questionnaires and surveys which limit the range of participant responses increases the likelihood of the researcher's biases influencing the findings. Respondents might also be prevented from expressing their own views and beliefs adequately. I considered that these factors weakened the reliability of relying solely on quantitative research.

An alternative to the deductive approach, and usually associated with a constructionist epistemology, is the inductive approach (Carr, 1994). Whilst deductive research tests theories, inductive research builds theories. Rather than starting with hypotheses, in inductive research initial data and/or literature are used to develop propositions, which in turn determine the basis on which

further data is collected and analysed (Carr 1994). Qualitative methods are usually associated with the inductive approach. The qualitative approach does not attempt to produce findings which are more widely generalisable, unlike quantitative research. The latter is more concerned with producing data from a sufficiently large sample to make findings statistically generalisable. In contrast qualitative research seeks a “depth of understanding ...based on a detailed knowledge of the particular, and its nuances in each context” (Hyde, 2000, p.84). Understanding in depth the context in which the booklet was piloted was important, hence I focused primarily, but not exclusively, on qualitative data collection, using methods described later in this chapter.

Case Study as a Research Approach

Commensurate with inductive research, I have adopted a case study approach. Broadly defined, a case study focuses on one or two examples of a specific phenomenon aimed at “providing an in-depth account of events, relationships, experiences and processes occurring in that particular instance” (Denscombe, 2007, p.35). In this case study, the principal phenomenon is piloting the booklet. By its nature, a case study is usually bounded by one or more characteristic(s) – time, geography, context - which brings into question the generalisability of the research findings (Creswell, 2007; Denscombe, 2007). This contrasts with positivist stance which holds that reality can be apprehended, is generalisable and is not temporally or contextually bound (Guba and Lincoln, 1989). From the outset my research did not aim to generalise findings, but rather from piloting the booklet to gain knowledge which could inform its future development. Progressing beyond this, to test out the generalisability of the booklet concept, would require further research.

During the course of the research the locations in which data were collected changed partly due to funding issues, and also because in the locations studied initially there turned out to be insufficient current concerns about ASB to provide adequate data. This did cause me some concern; but ultimately it meant I was able to collect data spanning a wider range of locations and associated contexts. Eisenhardt (2002) makes the point that such changes within case study research can be defined as “controlled opportunism in which researchers take advantage of the uniqueness of a specific case and the emergence of new themes to improve resultant theory” (p.17).

Overall, the piloting exercise covered four different sites; two in East Anglia (Location E and Location WW) and later two in the East Midlands (Location KL and Location WC). As stated earlier, it is normal within the case study approach for projects to be bounded geographically and temporally. In the two regions it was the Community Safety Team and the Safer Neighbourhood Team respectively who determined the research location. The West Norfolk CST also stipulated a timeframe, although the East Midlands SNT did not. Denscombe (2007) argues that “commissioned research might leave the researcher with little leeway in the selection of cases. The funder is quite likely to [make stipulations] ... leaving no discretion on the matter to the researchers themselves” (Denscombe, 2007, p.42). This comment was true for the choice of research locations, although I was happy to be guided by local knowledge. This input provided a stepping-stone to identifying purposive sampling later in my research.

In both regions the research locations were singled out “on the basis of specific attributes” (Denscombe, 2007, p.39), rather than for example using the principles of randomisation, usually linked with experimental research or large-scale surveys. The selection was based on the authorities’ knowledge of adults’ complaints about THA. As Denscombe (2007) highlights, in conducting case study research there is a need to “identify significant features on which comparisons with others in the class can be made (p.43).

All of the sites were unknown to me prior to the research. To familiarise myself with the sites I visited the Locations E and WW with members of the CST. They not only guided me round but also provided a professional interpretation of local dynamics. In addition, I spent some time alone walking round. In Locations KL and WC, similar visits were made; these were unaccompanied but supplemented by information from the SNT’s perspective via meetings and briefing documentation. Knowledge gained through the visits and meetings was recorded as field-notes. I also obtained quantitative demographic data from the Office for National Statistics, which helped to contextualise my research.

Ethics

Ethical issues have long been a focus of professional bodies in scientific and medical research; more recently social science research has received similar attention (Hammersley, 2009; Sin, 2005). Payne and Payne (2004) explain ethical practice as “a moral stance that involves conducting research to achieve not just high professional standards of technical procedures, but also respect and protection for the people actively consenting to be studied” (p.66).

In line with Anglia Ruskin University's requirements and code of practice, I submitted an application for ethical approval of my research by the UREC. Since respondents could potentially disclose sensitive data, I included the condition that nowhere in the data would respondents' anonymity be jeopardised. A Service Level Agreement (SLA) between me and the funders was produced which stipulated that 'confidentiality shall be upheld at all times by all partners, ensuring the safety and wellbeing of all participants within the project'.

Humphries and Martin (2000) emphasise that ethical considerations must be integral to the whole process of any research. However, Sarantakos (2005) suggests that the degree to which ethical stipulations are complied with can vary. He identifies three classifications of practice – "full adherence to ethics; relative adherence to ethics; questioning ethics" (p.22). Beginning the project, as a relative novice in research, I was committed to rigidly upholding UREC's requirements. This presented a significant dilemma when obtaining signed consent forms from some adult participants relating to questionnaire completion proved more difficult than expected. I was concerned that insisting on them signing might negatively affect their interaction with me during the interview. If they were happy to participate, but unwilling to sign, and accordingly I declined to interview them, I could lose valuable data. Part of good practice in research is not to pressurise individuals to participate. They should be provided with sufficient information about the research to make an educated decision about their willingness to volunteer (Denscombe, 2007). I was committed to not exerting any pressure (and to do so would have been contrary to my personal style). I distributed a comprehensive information leaflet prior to research

commencing, giving adequate time for householders to digest the information. I considered that these factors would adequately offset not obtaining written consent, and accordingly decided to forego it where appropriate. Reflecting on the process, for this specific instance I adopted the 'relative adherence to ethics' approach bearing in mind Sarantakos' (2005) comment that:

“[F]ull adherence to all ethical principles in all circumstances is neither possible, practical nor desirable. Being fully ethical and expecting all respondents to hand in a signed consent form would make it impossible to study [certain] issues. Bypassing ethical standards in certain areas of research is justified by the researcher if the study will produce valuable information that help society, and also those involved in the study, to improve the quality of their life.” (Sarantakos, 2005, p.22)

Although not part of my ethics approval application, avoidance of funder or researcher bias represented a further ethical issue. As Devine and Heath (1999) highlight, bias can be introduced when funders impose conditions on the direction research should take, and/or restrict the publication of findings or the use to which they can be put. These issues did not arise. Funders helped to identify areas for data collection, however they played no part in determining the research methods or the mechanics of completing the research. The SLA stipulated that I and the funders could use “separately or in conjunction with others, such material and information as is produced as a consequence of this Project for all reasonable purposes”.

The researcher's own personal beliefs and values can also introduce bias. Denzin (1989) highlights that “interpretive research begins and ends with the biography and self of the researcher” (p.12). An important feature of qualitative research is the continuous process of reflexivity by the researcher throughout the study to identify the influences she potentially brings to the different stages

of the research process. Whilst I return to this subject later in this chapter regarding the quality of my research, I feel it is important to emphasise here that my reflexivity is evident from the outset. I spent time deliberating on my beliefs and values and how they could impact on the research. In particular I questioned what my response would be if my findings did not support the continued development of the booklet. I took the view that whilst this would be disappointing, the conclusions drawn from the findings would be valuable both theoretically and practically.

Research Methods

Table 4.1 below provides an overview of the research tools and associated sample sizes, and demographic breakdown by age and gender. This is supplemented by the text in following sections.

Table 4.1: Overview of data collection

Research Tool	Sample Size	Demographic Profile	
		Age	Gender
Location E			
Door to door questionnaire	57	20-30 = 6 31-40 = 15 41-50 = 11 51-60 = 6 61-70 = 10 71+ = 8	M – 16 F – 40
Focus group – 1 x 2 hrs	4	31-40 = 1 51-60 = 2 61-70 = 1	M – 1 F – 3
Location WW			
Door to door questionnaire	55	20-30 = 5 31-40 = 11 41-50 = 11 51-60 = 13 61-70 = 8 71+ = 7	M – 17 F – 38

Focus group – 1 x 2 hrs	6	41-50 = 1 51-60 = 1 61-70 = 4	M – 4 F – 2
Location KL			
Door to door questionnaire	29	20-30 = 1 31-40 = 4 41-50 = 13 51-60 = 3 61-70 = 3 71+ = 4 Unassigned = 10	M – 18 F – 20
Focus group – 1 x 2 hrs	12	41-50 = 3 51-60 = 1 71+ = 8	M – 3 F – 9
Telephone interviews	7	41 – 50 = 2 51 – 60 = 1 71+ = 4	M – 0 F – 7
Location WC			
Door to door questionnaire	28	20-30 = 3 31-40 = 4 41-50 = 2 51-60 = 10 61-70 = 6 71+ = 3	M – 12 F – 16
Focus group – 1 x 2 hrs	3	41-50 = 2 51-60 = 1	M – 1 F – 2
Borough Council – representing Locations E and WW			
Workshops x 3	W1 = 10		M – 5; F – 5
	W2 = 12		M – 4; F – 8
	W3 = 7		M – 2; F – 5
Safer Neighbourhoods Team – representing Locations KL and WC			
One to one meeting	2		M - 2
Group meeting – 1 x 2.5 hrs	6		M – 2 F – 4
Telephone interviews	1 x 2 interviews 1 x 1 interview 1 x 1 interview 1 x 1 interview		M – 4 F – 1
Email	Correspondence with 2 individuals		M - 2

Sample

As mentioned in Chapter 1, respondents were drawn from two locations in East Anglia and two in the East Midlands. The boundaries of the research (place, time, and initial sample) were heavily influenced by the funders, as discussed earlier regarding potential funder bias. However, their input to the sample selection was advantageous in helping to identify suitable locations and a purposive sample (Creswell, 2007) in respect of the first stage of data collection. Denzin and Lincoln (1994) justify using a purposive sample in that “many qualitative researchers employ ... purposive, and not random, sampling methods. They seek out groups, settings and individuals where ... the processes being studied are most likely to occur” (p.202).

The first sample, using semi-structured questionnaires, totalled 168 respondents representing 56, 55, 38, 28 from Locations E, WW, KL and WC respectively. They were local residents, male and female, ranging from 20 years of age to 71+. Later, a small number of these respondents participated in area-based focus groups and, specific to Location KL, telephone interviews. Data were also collected from employees of the CST for East Anglia and SNT in the East Midlands, and representatives of local organisations. The funders again helped identify a purposive sample of research participants.

Data Collection - Methodology

Compared with the research sample, the decision on research tools was mine. In making the choices detailed below my aim was ‘methodological congruence’; a concept introduced by Morse and Richards (2002), and which Creswell (2007) explains as “the purposes, questions and methods of research are all

interconnected and interrelated so that the study appears as a cohesive whole rather than as fragmented, isolated parts” (p.42). Table 4.2 below provides an overview of my research activities.

Table 4.2: Key research activities

Phase	Activity	Details	Output
1a*	Fieldwork – data collection in Locations E and WW	Questionnaires: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • perceptions of problem • attitudes towards resolution 	Quantitative and qualitative data – see Table 4.1
		Focus groups: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • perceptions of problem • attitudes towards resolution 	Qualitative data – see Table 4.1
1b*	Literature based research	Literature relating to: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • conflict management • government policy - ASB 	1 st draft of booklet
	Development of booklet (East Anglia area)	3 x Workshops – see Table 4.1	Final draft of booklet. Data relevant to potential booklet implementation.
2a**	Fieldwork – data collection in Locations KL and WC - residents	Questionnaires: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • perceptions of problem • attitudes towards resolution 	Quantitative and qualitative data – see Table 4.1
		Focus groups: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • perceptions of problem • attitudes towards resolution • perceptions of booklet 	Qualitative data – see Table 4.1
2b**	Fieldwork – data collection (East Midlands area) – Safer Neighbourhood Team personnel	Interviews - one to one/group/telephone: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • perceptions of problem • attitudes towards resolution • perceptions of booklet 	Qualitative data – see Table 4.1
3	Fieldwork – data collection in Locations KL and WC - residents	Telephone interviews (after issue of booklet): <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • perceptions of problem • attitudes towards resolution • feedback on booklet 	Qualitative data – see Table 4.1

* Activities ran concurrently

** Activities ran concurrently

My aim at the start of data collection was to add further context. I wanted to build on knowledge gained during the site visits, and in particular establish to what extent local adults perceived YP 'hanging around' to be a problem, and how it affected them and their interaction with YP. To do this I first used a questionnaire incorporating both closed and open ended questions, followed by focus groups. I also planned that through the questionnaire I would identify people willing to take part in focus groups where it was planned that more in-depth qualitative data could be collected.

In deciding to use both qualitative and quantitative data I took account of debates such as that by Bazeley (2004) about what constitutes 'mixed methods' research, which Tashakkori and Teddlie (1998) define as 'mixed model' research. I considered that the extent of 'mixing' required for my work corresponded to the simple end of the wide spectrum of variations described by Bazeley (2002, p.143), namely "a side by side or sequential use of different methods". Creswell and Garrett (2008) subsequently identified three different schools of thought on 'mixed methods', the first of which applies the term 'mixed methods' to research, involving the 'collection, analysis and interpretation of data, **qualitative and quantitative**' (my emphasis). This again corresponds to my preferred approach. Since methodology is not the underlying focus of my research, it goes beyond the parameters of this thesis to debate the philosophical considerations involved in more sophisticated definitions of 'mixed methods'. Accordingly I have adopted Creswell's and Garrett's (2008) first definition quoted above when referring to 'mixed methods'.

Literature has identified a mixed methods approach being used at different stages of research; early in the research generation process, to aid sampling, and during data collection and analysis. Bryman (2006) identifies various reasons why researchers might utilise a mixed methods approach, for example, to aid triangulation or for one type of data to elaborate on the findings of another. At this point in my research I felt a mixed methods approach would be beneficial for two pragmatic reasons. Firstly, a primarily quantitative survey would allow a wider geographical area to be covered. Secondly, this process was an effective way of identifying samples for subsequent planned focus groups where qualitative data would be collected; a subject I will return to later in this chapter.

Data Collection - Questionnaires

Initially, quantitative data were provided by the Local Authorities or via national databases which draw on Census data. This was studied to build up information on the socio-economic profiles of the four locations. Taking a social constructionist approach I recognised the importance of collecting qualitative data to add meaning and context. As Moses and Knutson (2007) argue failure to do so “contributes to a twofold distancing: between the data and their context, and between these and the analyst” (p.246). To develop a better insight into adults’ perceptions of the severity of youth-related ASB two principal methods of data collection were considered. The Case Study method lends itself to different research methods, data sources and collection being used to build up a holistic account (Eisenhardt, 2002; Denscombe, 2007).

I identified two possible instruments - a postal/letterbox drop survey and a door-to-door (face-to-face) questionnaire. The advantages of option one were that it would be less expensive and time consuming to administer and the whole local area could be targeted (Bryman, 2004, p.133). It also reduced the likelihood of respondents under-reporting anxiety-inducing issues which they might be reluctant to reveal to an interviewer. However, I felt that the disadvantages outweighed the advantages. Even though strategies could be adopted to encourage survey completion (such as an explanatory covering letter, inclusion of a pre-paid reply envelope), the possibility of a low response rate, often associated with postal surveys (Bryman, 2004, pp.133-7), was an important consideration. A further concern was that respondents might not take the trouble to respond to the open ended questions and therefore more detailed data might be missed. In contrast, a door-to-door questionnaire meant that because I had direct contact with respondents I could prompt them to provide this information.

Using a door-to-door questionnaire, the second considered option, would enable me to meet residents face to face, to rephrase questions if I felt the original had been misunderstood, and ask additional questions which could emerge during the course of the interview (Creswell, 2007, p.39). It also meant that data were being collected in people's natural setting (Creswell, 2007, p.37), enabling me to gain a better understanding of the context in which the research was set. This point is indeed reflected in my experience of profiling the locations. Whilst the official statistical data gave an overview it needed to be supplemented by qualitative data to facilitate a deeper understanding. However, a disadvantage of the door-to-door questionnaire was that it would

prove too expensive and time-consuming to cover the entire local areas.

Following discussion with the LAs cluster sampling (Denscombe, 2007, p.15) emerged as the preferred strategy, and they identified areas where complaints of THA were most prevalent.

The questionnaire was based on that used in the British Crime Survey.

Criticism of quantitative data has been well rehearsed (Bryman, 2004; Moses and Knutsen, 2007; Sarantakos, 2005), and the data contained in the British Crime Survey (BCS) is no exception. For example, general criticisms are insufficient contextualisation of findings, and that closed ended questions restrict potential responses. Despite these drawbacks I decided to base my questionnaire on the BCS for two reasons. Firstly, it would allow me to compare the local findings about the research locations with the national picture of ASB. Secondly, it would provide a baseline of data which could be contextualised and expanded on by the addition of open ended questions and subsequent collection of qualitative data.

I used the term 'teenagers' as representing familiar terminology, but chose not to be specific about the exact age range, in order to allow respondents to make their own interpretation. In putting the questions to respondents I qualified the term 'teenagers' by referring also to 'young people' so as not to inhibit the inclusion of, for example, 10 or 11 year olds if their behaviour was perceived as a problem. Copies of the questionnaires used in Locations E and WW, and Locations KL and WC are attached – Appendices 2 and 3 respectively.

I piloted the questionnaire in order to identify and reduce researcher bias, to ensure clarity of questions (particularly in relation to the open ended questions) and to ensure that superfluous questions were not included, or important ones (which would result in major aspects of the research not being covered) omitted. It was also useful for estimating how long completion would take, and determining what resources were needed (Teijlingen and Hundley, 2001). Bias is discussed further on page 122.

Rather than try to find a pilot sample close to the actual research site which would have involved a 100 mile return trip, for pragmatic reasons I used a sample of volunteers living locally to me. I also did not want to approach individuals who might later be suitable respondents for the 'live' stage of data collection. As Teijlingen and Hundley (2001) explain "a common problem is the inclusion of pilot study participants in the site(s) of the main study. Here concern is that such participants have already been exposed to an intervention, and therefore, may respond differently from those who have not" (Teijlingen and Hundley, 2001, p.2).

The results of the pilot necessitated only minor changes to phrasing. Subsequently, the areas designated were visited and around 50 questionnaires were completed in both Locations E and WW, and approximately 25 in both Locations KL and WC. In the case of Locations E and WW, this was well in excess of the numbers stipulated by the funders who had set the figure at 30 overall. The exercise took less time than planned, so I decided to complete additional questionnaires, based on the rationale that the greater the number of residents completing the questionnaire the greater the likelihood that data

collected would be representative of the population of the designated area (Bell, 1999).

As the person tasked with conducting the questionnaires I admit I felt apprehensive. I was concerned that by employing the 'cold calling' approach often used in marketing, to which I felt the door-to-door strategy could be likened, householders might feel under pressure to respond (Tee and Lathlean, 2004), which I considered unethical. Secondly I was also concerned that arriving 'unannounced' might reduce the number of willing respondents, which had been the experience of Robertson, et al. (2000). Their investigation into the poor response rate in their pilot research revealed the cold calling technique as the culprit. Distributing an introductory letter 1-2 weeks before their data collection commenced resulted in a 16% increase in response rate. Following their example I prepared an information sheet about the research in the format of a leaflet (Appendix 4) which was colourful to attract readers' attention. I also included my photograph on the front cover so that residents would recognise me. The leaflets were delivered throughout the designated areas a week in advance, to give residents time to read the information before I called, and hopefully reduce reluctance to participate. Based on positive responses to the leaflet and willingness to complete the questionnaire it proved a successful strategy; very few residents declined to be interviewed.

Prior to going into the 'field' I produced a consent form (Appendix 5), approved by UREC, for respondents to sign. At the start of each interview I recapped the details contained in the information leaflet previously distributed and explained the need for respondents to sign the consent form. Whilst the majority of

householders were willing to answer the questionnaire, as explained earlier, not all were willing to sign the consent form. This presented me with the dilemma of how far I should encourage people to sign. Wiles, Heath, Crow and Charles.

(2005) make the point that:

“[T]he need to obtain a signature ... might be problematic in that it makes the [interview] process a formal one and it is feared that this might be seen as off-putting for some people. Researchers ... have noted that the use of signed consent forms may compromise issues of confidentiality and anonymity”. (Wiles, Heath, Crow and Charles, 2005, p.16)

From respondents' comments I concluded that the main issue was the fact that I had assured them that their anonymity would be preserved, yet I was asking them to identify themselves by signing the form. As explained earlier, on balance I took the decision not to press people to sign the form.

Creswell (2007) characterises case study research as 'emergent'; for example, as the process unfolds changes may be deemed necessary or opportunities for additional data collection become apparent. As I became more familiar with the research settings I learnt of additional avenues through which to channel the questionnaire in Location E. This I considered appropriate as it might negate any potential residents' complaints of being excluded. The editor of the village magazine which went to every house in the village, agreed to include the information sheet and questionnaire. Also the Headteacher at the Children's Centre sent the same to the parents from the village whose children attended the Centre. However, my excitement that this would add significantly to the data was short-lived. Both attracted little response although some interesting data resulted from the Children's Centre initiative. This exercise and low

response rate did confirm that a postal survey was unlikely to have produced the same level of response as the door-to-door strategy.

Data Collection – Focus Groups

Subsequent to the questionnaires I held focus groups to collect more detailed data on adults' perceptions of teenager related ASB. My decision to do so was reinforced by Burney's (2005) criticism regarding the limitations of the BCS as discussed in Chapter 2. She complains that the quantitative data presentation masks the qualitative differences of the "incivilities making up the index of anti-social behaviour" (p.12). This raised my concern that such shortcomings could figure in the quantitative and limited qualitative data from the door-to-door questionnaire. It included a mixture of closed and (relatively few) open questions. This was done purposely so as to limit interviewees' time taken (Bryman, 2004). Of course this meant that I was less likely to obtain responses that reflected the "full richness of interviewees' opinions" (Denscombe, 2007, p.166).

A focus group can be defined as "simply a discussion in which a small group of people under the guidance of a facilitator, talk about a topic selected for discussion" (Macleod Clark, et al., 1996, cited in Mansell, et al., 2004, p.79). Employing focus groups is cited as a quick, flexible and cheap way of collecting data (Marshall and Green, 2004; Mendes de Almeida 1980; Morgan 1997; Tynan and Drayton 1988).

Mendes de Almeida (1980) also lists various criticisms of group discussion (including focus groups), namely:

“[T]he sample is too small; the sample is not representative; responses are biased by interaction among participants; self appointed leaders will bias other participants’ opinions; data are too ‘soft’ to be reliable; results are not replicable; and results cannot be extrapolated to the population”. (Mendes de Almeida, 1980, p.114)

However, he then goes on to argue that, provided they are managed correctly, group discussions can in fact be a robust method of gathering data. Arguing that role-playing is a natural part of group discussion, he focuses on the moderator’s goal - to “promote an adequate balance among the participants so that the role-playing process can take place as expediently and smoothly as possible” (Mendes de Almeida 1980, p.115). If the moderator can focus the group on matters important for that particular group, then what emerges will be a blended view influenced by individuals’ starting positions and by interaction between them. Summarising, he argues that “group discussions are a means of eliciting a sample of behaviour from a social group and, from there, of inferring the full pattern of cognitive behaviour of that social group” (Mendes de Almeida, 1980, p.114). This was particularly important in that my research was designed ultimately to produce a tangible output namely the booklet. To be effective the booklet would have to recognise the social values of the communities in question. ‘Recognise’ does not imply total agreement with current values and behaviour, since the booklet had been designed to modify certain behaviours. Equally though, if during the piloting exercise the booklet’s tone was too far removed from the values of the communities, and if it failed to give some credence to those values, it would risk being rejected out of hand. Accordingly, the output from group discussions – characterised by Mendes de Almeida (1980) as “a replay of the values of the social group to which participants belong” – would be of particular value in piloting the booklet (p.115).

Focus group participants were self-selecting, being questionnaire respondents who had volunteered to attend. The disadvantage was that participants might not represent a cross-section of the community. In the event I was satisfied that there was a reasonable mix in terms of age, gender and social background. Moreover, they were willing participants with no pressure exerted to persuade them to be involved, in line with ethical practice (Sarantakos, 2005).

After piloting the focus group questions with a similar group to that used for the questionnaire pilot, one focus group was conducted in each Location. I had hoped to conduct two focus groups in each location, however due to availability constraints of potential participants, only one group per location was possible. The number of participants recommended ranged between 6-12 (Mansell, et al., 2004; Morgan 1997). Given the difficulties outlined, the number of participants ranged from 3 in Location WC, 4 in Location E, 6 in Location WW and 12 in Location KL. Although the low numbers in Locations E and WC were disappointing, the participants represented different areas of each location.

Location KL, the area eventually chosen to pilot the booklet, also had the most focus group participants, and I considered that they represented a satisfactory cross section of residents. Overall, the sample provided data from both men and women, from a wide age range and different house tenures.

In conducting the focus groups, whilst broadly being guided by the major procedural steps outlined by Sarantakos (2005, p.196), I devised a four step format – warm up, introduction, discussion, relaxation. The warm up session involved light refreshments and informal discussion. During the introductory

session, attendees were reminded of the information sheet distributed during the door-to-door questionnaire exercise and consent forms were signed. Discussion flowed freely, and although at times it was difficult to keep participants focused fully on specified questions, everyone contributed although some were more verbose than others. The focus group data guided my choice of Location KL as the most suitable site to pilot the booklet; copies were distributed to and discussed with focus group members. A short explanation of this process is given on page 247.

Data Collection – Telephone Interviews

Approximately eight weeks after distributing the booklet I conducted telephone interviews with 7 of the participants who had attended the focus group. There were several reasons why I chose to carry out interviews rather than conduct a further focus group. Firstly, prior to collecting data it was not possible to gauge with any certainty the current climate of relations between the young families and complainants. If there was a possibility that over the summer tension had increased I thought it unethical to arrange a focus group which the 'conflicting' parties could potentially attend; this could further exacerbate a volatile situation. Even if attendance was by invitation only this would not necessarily prevent opposing parties' presence. I could not rule out residents inviting other neighbours, which was the case at the first focus group. This meant however that I could gather only indirect information (via another participant) about the views of the parents of children considered anti-social by older residents. I consider it a shortcoming in my data collection that I was unable to gather rich data on this aspect of the piloting exercise.

Data Collection – Organisations

The above research instruments provided data on residents' perspectives. To gain a broader understanding of the issues potentially affecting the booklet's implementation I also gathered data from other residents who represented various local organisations (such as the Parish Council, junior football clubs, Neighbourhood Watch) and from professionals (such as the Police, Youth Workers, Anti-Social Behaviour Officers). In the case of Locations E and WW, this was done during the booklet development workshops. For Locations KL and WC, data collection involved telephone interviews, email exchange, plus meetings either one to one or in a small group of the Safer Neighbourhood Team (see Tables 4.1 and 4.2).

Recording, transcribing and reporting the findings

Other than the booklet workshops I recorded focus groups, meetings and telephone interviews; the data collected from the last three instruments form the main basis of my qualitative data analysis. The workshop locations were not conducive to recording, so I took notes, the reliability of which was enhanced by my fluent shorthand skills. Although not specifically analysed, I also kept field-notes throughout, using them as memory prompts at every stage of analysis. Recording discussions has clear advantages over note-taking; not least it helps to ensure the inclusion and accurate reporting of all the important points. Listening to recordings makes it easier to pick up on the meaning intended by the participants, based on the tone of voice or the emphasis placed on particular words or phrases. This is more difficult to achieve in note taking (Bryman, 2004). Translating the spoken word into text is laborious and time-consuming partly because it involves interpreting difficult-to-decipher sections

particularly where more than one person is speaking. Also, inevitably, in some instances a degree of ordering is required for example where people interject (Atkinson, 1998). I used the transcription system recommended by Poland (2002) to record, for example, non-verbal gestures necessary to accurately interpret meaning. Table 4.1 below, taken from Poland (2002) denotes the transcribing conventions used.

Table 4.3: Adopted transcription convention

Symbol	Usage
()	Non-verbal information, such as laughing or sighing
(overlapping)	Signifies an interruption occurred
[?]	Garbled, indecipherable speech
(p)	Pause of two to three seconds
(pp)	Pause of four or more seconds
CAPITALS	Emphasis

I transcribed all the tapes personally, initially without the transcription conventions, which I inserted during proofreading. Re-reading the transcriptions I added notes where connections were identified between data given by different participants at different times. I substituted participants' names with codes to maintain their anonymity, respecting my UREC ethical approval.

I selected extracts representative of the code to which they relate for inclusion in the findings chapters, seeking to include examples illustrating the full range of data collected. In some instances I have used the same extract twice where it represents two different points. Because some participants were more verbose than others they are more frequently quoted, although I have used quotes from less talkative participants where possible.

Analysis – Quantitative Data

Bryman (2004) states that, although analysis of quantitative data is often undertaken later in the research process, nevertheless consideration of how analysis will be undertaken should be considered earlier; for example, at the design stage. I, in fact, analysed the quantitative section of questionnaire responses as soon as the data had been collected to inform the design stage of the planned focus groups.

Software tools

SPSS software was used to analyse quantitative data. Given the relatively small samples in each of the locations it was inappropriate to undertake an extensive statistical analysis. A priority was to gain descriptive information and therefore I limited myself to generating basic frequency reports which showed the different levels of perception against age, gender and location.

Analysis – Qualitative Data

Software

Software programs such as NVivo are becoming more commonly used in qualitative analysis. However, there are two distinct schools of thought on the use of computerised software. One is that a manual strategy is superior because it helps you to relate closely with the data. Silverman (2011) believed that using software can impose limitations to the marking up and manipulation of text. Saldaña (2009) argues that:

“There is something about manipulating qualitative data on paper and writing codes in pencil that give you more control over the ownership of the work. ... There is something to be said for a large area of desk or table space with multiple pages or strips of paper spread out to see the small pieces of the larger puzzle”. (Saldaña, 2009, p.22)

The counter-argument advanced by, for example, Bazeley (2007) is that the level of complexity and detail of coding, and the resultant ability to undertake an iterative process which facilitates an in-depth interrogation of the data, is a major advantage of a computerised system.

I admit to taking a deep breath and jumping straight into using NVivo. Progress was slow at first, but after some elementary training and better familiarising myself with the intricacies of the software I became a supporter of this method. I question the criticism that computer analysis prevents the researcher getting close to the data (Bazeley, 2007). Once familiar with manipulating, changing, and merging data without losing previous versions I became confident in recoding or moving data between codes and found it an efficient way of working.

Coding Qualitative Data

Coding developed through a series of stages. Initially, I read and re-read the qualitative data transcripts in the order in which the data were collected. Next, drawing on Bazeley's (2007) inductive approach I developed open coding. This involved deconstructing the data; reading the text line by line to identify important words or phrases. Sarantakos (2005) suggests that by deconstructing data and stripping it of context the researcher derives a deeper

understanding of the phenomenon under study and reduces the likelihood of inappropriate general assumptions being made. Following data reconstruction I clustered codes into themes. At this point codes were revised with some being split or, more frequently, merged. Strauss and Corbin (2008) refer to the clustering of codes as “axial coding” (p.195), an intermediate stage between open coding and theoretical coding; it aids the transition from descriptive to theoretical coding (Bazeley, 2007). Miles and Huberman (1994) refer to this stage of coding as “pattern coding” (p.57) and suggest that it highlights relationships between concepts coded in different clusters. They identify four pattern code types: themes, causes or explanations, relationships and emerging constructs. Bazeley (2007) suggests that these “serve to refine categories, prompt early analysis, focus data collection, build a conceptual framework in which to place incidents and interactions, and to lay groundwork for cross-case analysis” (p.111). This intermediate process helped me to conceptualise THA and governance, and to compare views on governance across the different locations, and between participants representing different community sectors.

In the early stages of cluster coding data the themes of *responsibilisation*, and *authoritarian* and *welfaristic* approaches to governance emerged. At this point my analysis was informed by Garland’s (1996) work on responsibilisation, referred to in Chapter 2. He uses this concept to explain the devolving of governance to third parties involving “action on the part of non-state agencies and organisations as well as communities and individuals” (Garland, 1996, p.452). Relatively late in the analysis process I studied data from the telephone interviews with residents in The Close. From reflecting on the data (particularly that relating to participants’ thoughts

on why a perceived improvement in YP's behaviour had occurred), and having peer discussions, the notion of locus of control emerged. Reading the social psychological literature on 'locus of control' (for example, Salazar, Hubbard and Salazar, 2002; Gifford, Brienco-Perriott and Mianzo, 2006) led me to the concept of 'self-efficacy' (one's perceived capability to act or control events) associated with Bandura's Social Cognitive Theory (see for example, Bandura 1989). As well as self-efficacy, SCT identifies 'agency' as a multi-layered concept which resonates with my data relating to governance of ASB. These concepts were not fully captured within Garland's (1996) 'responsibilisation' concept, as further discussed below. The SCT provided a more suitable theoretical framework against which to review my data, as explained below.

Development of SCT has focused on building knowledge around the prediction of behaviour, the process of individuals' learning and changes in behaviour. SCT has been used, for example, to study behaviour in the context of health, education, and sport (Bandura 2004; Block, Taliaferro, Harris and Krause, 2010; Feltz and Lirgg, 2001). The emphasis has broadly been on using the concepts of 'agency' and 'self-efficacy' to bring about improvement such as better educational attainment or improved health. Bandura (2012) argues that the "body of knowledge for effecting personal and social change is one of the hallmarks of social cognitive theory" (p.14). In contrast for the most part I have used SCT differently, namely as an analytical tool to understand research participants' conceptualisation of governance of the social issue of ASB, finding the SCT-related concepts of agency and self-efficacy particularly valuable.

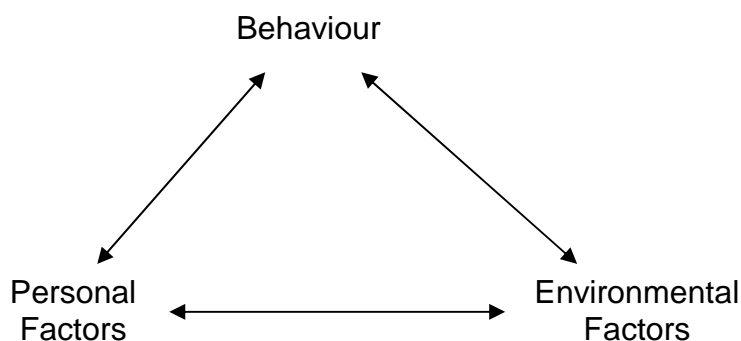
In Chapter 9 I have used SCT as a framework to inform the future development of workshops aimed at effecting behaviour change; that is encouraging individuals to become more active agents in the governance of ASB. In this respect I used SCT in line with how the theory is generally positioned.

The SCT holds that human development and behaviour do not result from external stimuli alone (Pajares, 2002). It also refutes the notion that individuals are autonomous agents and behaviour is determined by self-influence alone. Bandura (1989) argues that personal and biological factors cannot fully explain human behaviour. He recognises individuals' agentic capacity – “a functional consciousness and a self-identity” (Bandura, 2006, p.167) – but he emphasises the interplay between personal and external factors. This is a process he terms as ‘reciprocal determinism’ (Bandura 1989). He argues that:

“Social cognitive theory explains human functioning in terms of triadic reciprocal causations. In this model of reciprocal causality, internal personal factors in the form of cognitive, affective, and biological events, behavioural patterns, and environmental influences all operate as interacting determinants that influence one another bidirectionally”. (Bandura, 2001, p.14-5)

For example, an individual's expectations, values, and self-concept (internal personal factors) influence behaviour. However, in turn the behaviour carried out affects one's thoughts and emotions. Bandura does not suggest that the three factors always operate in unison, but that different factors may be more dominant at different times depending on the individual and the situation (Bandura 1989). Figure 4.1 below provides a useful representation of the three factors which Bandura argued influence human behaviour. The arrows depict the reciprocal interplay between the factors.

Figure 4.1: Bandura's Model of Triadic Reciprocity within the Social Cognitive Theory



Source: Parjares (2002, p.2)

SCT identifies three distinct forms of agency (personal, collective, and proxy) and highlights the effect that one's perceived level of self-efficacy can have on one's own agency (Bandura, 1989). Through the iterative process of re-reading the data against the SCT I revised my coding and developed theoretical relationships between the data and the concepts of governance and agency. This process also highlighted the limitations of coding data against Garland's work which does not explore the concept of agency in sufficient detail. As Owen (2007) explained in critiquing Garland's work, "Foucauldian analysis of the sort drawn upon by Garland appears to elevate social structure to prominence, whilst neglecting the role of agency" (p.7).

Literature highlights a number of criticisms of the SCT specifically in relation to the concept of self-efficacy, in particular from Vancouver and colleagues (for example see Vancouver and Kendall, 2006; Vancouver, Thompson, Tischner and Putka, 2002; Vancouver, Thompson and Williams, 2001). They argue that belief in one's own abilities can lead to over-confidence and become disadvantageous to performance – and as such can have the opposite effect to

that claimed by Bandura's work. I decided that this was not a critical consideration for my research because, as described above, I was not focusing on improving performance but rather on analysing how people conceptualise governance. Furthermore, the great weight of research evidence supported Bandura's findings. Subsequently, Bandura made a closely argued and systematic rebuttal of these criticisms, including various methodological weaknesses in the research underlying them (Bandura, 2012). Further discussions of the SCT and the associated concepts of agency and self-efficacy are included in Chapters 7, 8, 9 and 10.

Quality

'Validity' and 'reliability' are concepts long associated with quantitative research. There is an ongoing debate about the appropriateness of these being applied to qualitative and mixed method studies and whether alternatives should be sought (see for example, Mays and Pope, 2000; Onwuegbuzie and Johnson, 2006). It is outside the scope of my thesis to undertake a related, critical discussion of the debate. Whatever concepts are used, the intention is to establish a study's quality, and it is for this reason that I use this term as the heading for the discussion below.

Swanborn (2010) highlights that "the standards for research quality in social science are valid for case study research as well as for all other research strategies" (p.36), and suggests that criteria applied to other qualitative research are relevant to case studies. Numerous checklists to assess research quality exist. For example, Creswell (2007) provides one containing eight criteria. Lincoln and Guba (1985 cited in Tobin and Begley, 2004) consider quantitative

research criteria inappropriate for qualitative research, and identify four criteria considered more suitable. Mays and Pope (2000) suggest that qualitative research can be tested by two broad criteria usually associated with quantitative research – validity and relevance – but their operationalisation must be compatible with qualitative research aims. Bassey (1999) argues that whilst reliability and validity are appropriate criteria for some research, they are inappropriate for a case study, the specificity of which makes it difficult to establish whether findings can be repeated or generalised. He suggests that ‘trustworthiness’ is more appropriate and provides a list of eight assessment criteria.

Barbour (2001) argues that sticking rigidly to a prescriptive checklist can be counter-productive because one runs “the risk of compromising the unique contribution that systematic and thoughtfully carried out research can make” (p.1117). I agree with this sentiment and accordingly rather than adhering uncritically to a checklist I detail below the strategies I considered appropriate to enhance the quality of my research.

Data collection stage:

Earlier in this chapter I explained my reasons for piloting both the questionnaire and focus groups; for example, to reduce researcher bias, and to ensure clarity of questions. Mays and Pope (2000) highlight that there is the potential for researcher’s assumptions and experience to affect the research process. They also emphasise that personal characteristics and manner can influence respondents’ reactions and answers, and prevent a rapport between respondents and researcher. To minimise these risks I rehearsed my style of

questioning to avoid influencing the respondents' answers. During fieldwork I avoided making comments that might appear judgemental about answers given. To be perceived as approachable rather than officious I purposely chose a smart casual rather than formal dress style.

Commonly, triangulation is a strategy included in quality checklists (for example, Denzin and Lincoln, 1998; Miles and Huberman, 1994). While Mays and Pope (2000) speak of triangulation in terms of collecting data from multiple sources, Denzin (1978) also lists methodological, theoretical and investigator triangulation. Sarantakos (2005) adds time triangulation, also referred to as successive triangulation. The rationale for utilising triangulation is to produce 'more valid and reliable results' than single methods (Torrance, 2012), although some argue that this outcome is not necessarily guaranteed (Silverman, 1985 cited in Sarantakos, 2005). Mays and Pope (2000) suggest that rather than testing for validity, "triangulation may ... be better seen as a way of ensuring comprehensiveness and encouraging a more reflexive analysis of the data" (p.51). Tobin and Begley (2004, p.393) cite triangulation as aiding 'completeness'. I consider that through employing triangulation in the form of multiple methods and multiple streams of data collection I have enhanced the validity of my research. I agree with the point made by Mays and Pope (2000) that by incorporating "a wide range of different perspectives ... the viewpoint of one group is never presented as if it represents the sole truth" (p.51).

Employing respondent validity can be used to corroborate the accuracy of the researcher's transcription of collected data. I did not use this strategy for the following reasons. The questionnaires were generally completed anonymously.

In respect of focus group and workshop data I decided seeking respondent validity was inappropriate. For the data to be meaningful to participants each would require a full transcript of the relevant focus group/workshop, as opposed to seeing a transcript of his/her comments only. Ethically I considered this inappropriate. My aim was to make every effort to maintain confidentiality; distributing the transcripts could compromise that aim in that I would lose control of the possible further dissemination of potentially sensitive data. This might contravene my ethical commitment, and might adversely affect participant relations. Consequently I sought alternative strategies.

Firstly, all data samples formed a key focus of supervisions during which searching questions were asked about data collection and content. I was able to seek respondent validation for Location KL focus group data during the subsequent telephone interviews without compromising my commitment to confidentiality. Preparation for the telephone interviews included re-reading the focus group data and highlighting sections to clarify. Interview plans included questions enabling me to check my data transcription and explore previous issues in more detail with individuals.

Data analysis stage:

The analysis stage included further peer review and debriefing sessions with my supervisors. As a lone researcher, aware of the bias I might bring to the analysis process, I found the multiple coding of samples of my data invaluable. It prompted me to interrogate different interpretations of data and critically look at my coding/analysis methods, and emphasised the importance of deviant case analysis (Mays and Pope, 2000).

Reporting stage:

In reporting on my research I have attempted to be fully transparent regarding my research strategies. To illustrate my findings and conclusions I include a wide range of quotes representing different data streams.

There is significant support for the view that qualitative research, in particular case study research, is not generalisable (see for example, Creswell, 2007; Swanborn, 2010). Denzin (1983) argues that expectations of generalisability in qualitative research are misplaced. My opening intention was not to prove generalisability but, through a pilot study, to better understand the potential value of developing the Let's Talk project. However, I acknowledge Schofield's (2002) comment that for others to judge whether or not research is transferable to other situations as much detail as possible should be provided not only on research methods, but also on the research context. Accordingly I collected and included in my thesis contextual data from the field and from official publications (see Appendix 6) to aid comparison between my and future research.

Summary

In this chapter I have outlined the methodological approach used, the theoretical bases and academic arguments on which I drew, and the processes undertaken in the different stages of data gathering and analysis. My aim has been to clearly show the steps taken and the factors which influenced the direction my study has taken. In Chapters 5, 6, 7 and 8, I undertake a discussion of the research findings. Each chapter links to specific stages of data collection.

Chapter 5

What is Anti-Social about Teenagers Hanging Around?: a localised view

In this chapter I begin by giving a brief description of each location, supplemented by statistical analysis of a number of relevant indicators in Appendix 6, to contextualise subsequent data analysis. Table 5.1 below provides a concise overview of data discussed in Appendix 6. Information derived from local data was essential to understand both residents' perception of ASB, and the context in which the booklet was to be piloted.

Research Locations – Profiles

Table 5.1: Research area profiles

Category	E	WW	KL	WC
Demographics				
Population	1,648	1,324	1,462	1,940
Age Structure:	%			
0-9 yrs	9.3	9.1	10.9	12.1
10-19 yrs	11.3	12.8	13.5	10.7
20-44 yrs	24.2	26.3	29.5	30.8
45-64 yrs	29.5	31.2	29.8	28.0
65+	25.7	20.6	16.3	18.4
Ethnicity:	%			
White	98.6	98.5	98.6	97.6
Mixed	0.6	0.6	0.8	0.5
Asian/Asian British	0.4	0.9	0.7	1.3
Black	0.3	0.1	0.0	0.4
Other	0.3	0.1	0.0	0.3
Household Composition:	%			
Married/cohabiting + dependent children	21.3	22.8	24.3	22.7
Married/cohabiting – no dependent children	46.5	47.2	40.5	41.8
Lone parent + dependent children	5.0	3.4	6.9	5.7
Lone parent – no dependent children	3.0	2.3	1.4	4.0
1 person household	22.3	21.3	24.9	21.5
Other	1.9	3.0	2.0	4.3

Index of Multiple Deprivation – Ranking*				
Aggregate Score of the 7 domains	17,256	15,826	21,478	11,217
Individual domains:				
Income	16,397	14,857	18,435	12,821
Employment	13,839	16,115	13,184	11,609
Health deprivation/disability	19,331	16,372	17,680	14,964
Education skills and training	8,689	11,877	20,601	6,720
Barriers to housing/services	17,561	9,656	28,187	29,854
Crime	23,972	16,863	24,254	1,022
Living environment	22,119	18,754	26,383	29,296

Source: ONS, 2001

* The IMD rankings sit within a national framework in which rankings range from 1-32,482; 1 represents the highest level of deprivation, 32,482 the lowest level.

Before starting my research I visited each location to familiarise myself with the area. Since I visited the four locations before getting ethical approval these were informal familiarisation visits and no formal data were collected.

Taking the neighbouring locations in East Anglia first, with a population of 1,648 in Location E and 1,324 in Location WW, both host primary schools, accommodating 229 (4-11 year olds) and 210 (3-11 year olds) respectively. Location E boasts a recently built Children's Centre and Nursery School combined, catering for approximately 50 pre-school children. Although the smaller of the two, Location WW hosts the secondary school which in September 2008 had 804 children (11-16 years) on roll; both Location E and WW primary schools feed into the secondary school.

Location E has the benefit of several shops, its village hall, primary school and Children's Centre being in the 'heart' of the village. From visiting the Children's Centre I learned about the varied subsidiary activities hosted there, and got the

sense that it provided a focal point where residents meet and interact. The main criticism I heard, from parents and older residents alike, was the location of the recreation ground on the village outskirts. Parents were uneasy about letting children go there without adult supervision – either for fear of children's safety or the mischief they may get up to. On several occasions when visiting the village in the late afternoon or early evening, when one might expect to see children and teenagers about, they were noticeable by their absence.

The layout of Location WW contrasts markedly to Location E in that it sprawls along and flanks either side of one, long road that runs through the village, with a few minor roads leading to small closes. I had a sense of disconnectedness about the Village; the primary school is at one end of the main through road, the secondary school in the middle, and one shop, church and pub at the other end. There is no recreation ground, although children appear to use the secondary school playing field for out of school sports activities. Although there is a village hall, this is a short distance outside the village along an isolated length of road. The disconnectedness was something I perceived, but which was reinforced by comments made by some villagers. It was not uncommon for residents living at one end of the village referring to those living at the opposite end as being remote – saying that they rarely came into contact with them.

In both villages adult residents had complained to the LA about THA and in fact, prior to the research project, a Dispersal Order had been imposed near the main shops and village hall in Location E. This resulted from local residents' complaints and some minor damage to the village hall thought to have been perpetrated by YP gathering in the area.

Location KL, population 1,940, forms part of a small town with a total population of approximately 2,754. Location KL sits west of the town, surrounded on three sides by fields, giving me the impression of a self-contained village. On the fourth side there are a few shops, and a park with playground equipment; nearby is an old Victorian style building hosting a public library and youth centre. The nearby primary school has just under 200 pupils aged 5-11; it also plays host to various adult evening classes. Children from the area travel to a nearby town for secondary education.

The specific research site in Location KL is a residential area comprising clusters of private houses and bungalows on a series of interconnected roads and small cul-de-sacs. My impression was of a generally well maintained area, although the gardens of two apparently vacant houses needed attention. At the time of my weekday, mid-afternoon visit I saw little activity apart from one or two people driving away.

Unlike the other locations, I considered Location WC with a population of 1,462 had a rundown appearance. It sits on the south side edge of a large, rundown town, population 72,514. Location WC comprises part of a large estate of post-war ex-council houses and few trees and flowers to soften the built landscape. The local primary school, approximately 270 children, and adjoining nursery school form part of the estate. For secondary education, children travel to one of two nearby schools.

Close to the research site there is a small shopping mall. Its shabby appearance with several retail units boarded up and closed reinforced the

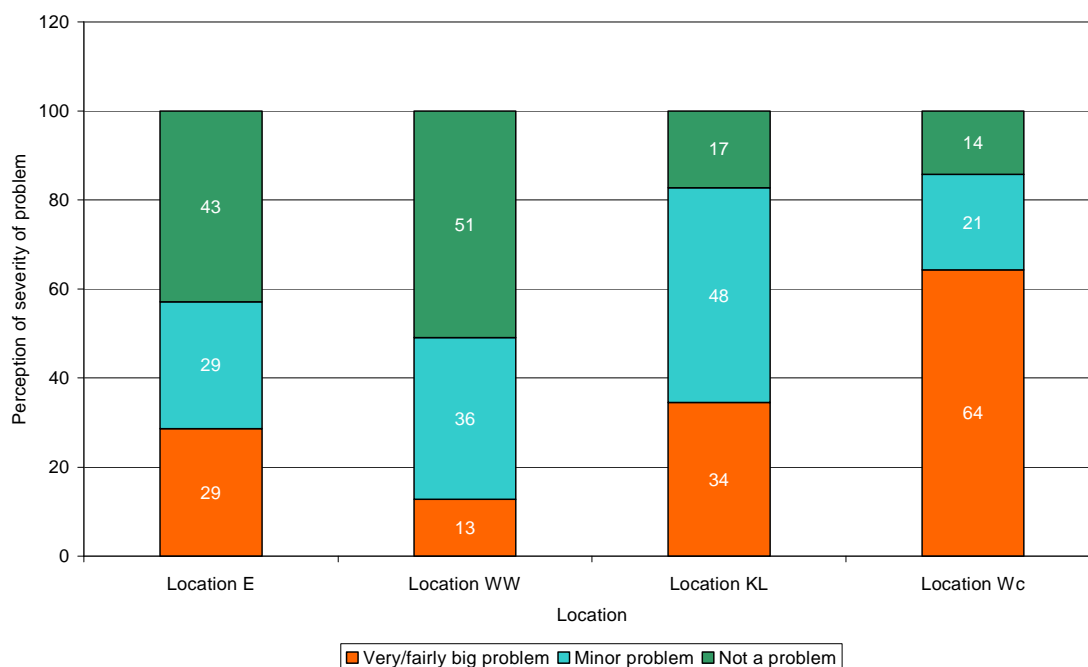
rundown appearance. Unfortunately, the day of my visit was half day closing, so there were no people around. There was one relatively large grassed area in the middle of the estate which I presumed was somewhere children could play, but no playground equipment was sited there. At one end of this area sat a prefabricated single-storey building which hosted a youth club.

Adult Residents' Perceptions of ASB - Quantitative Data

As discussed in Chapter 3, the definition of ASB is very vague, fluid and open to interpretation; what one person may interpret as ASB by a young person 'hanging around' another might see it as 'kids will be kids' (Millie, Jacobson, Hough and Paraskevopoulou, 2005, p24). My methodological approach required me to understand what YP-related behaviour local residents were construing as anti-social, and the extent to which they were experiencing it. I used the data gathered from the door-to-door questionnaires, focus groups and SNT members responsible for Locations KL and WC.

Whilst, due to the small sample size (totalling 168 respondents across the four location; 56, 55, 29, 28 in Locations E, WW, KL and WC respectively), it is outside the scope of this thesis to undertake sustained statistical analysis, the quantitative data contain valuable information which helps to understand residents' perceptions. Focusing first on the structured questions, Graph 5.1 below shows the extent to which residents in the four locations perceived 'teenagers hanging around' as a very/fairly big problem, minor problem or not a problem.

Graph 5.1: Teenagers Hanging Around – Adults' Perceptions of Scale of Problem in All Locations

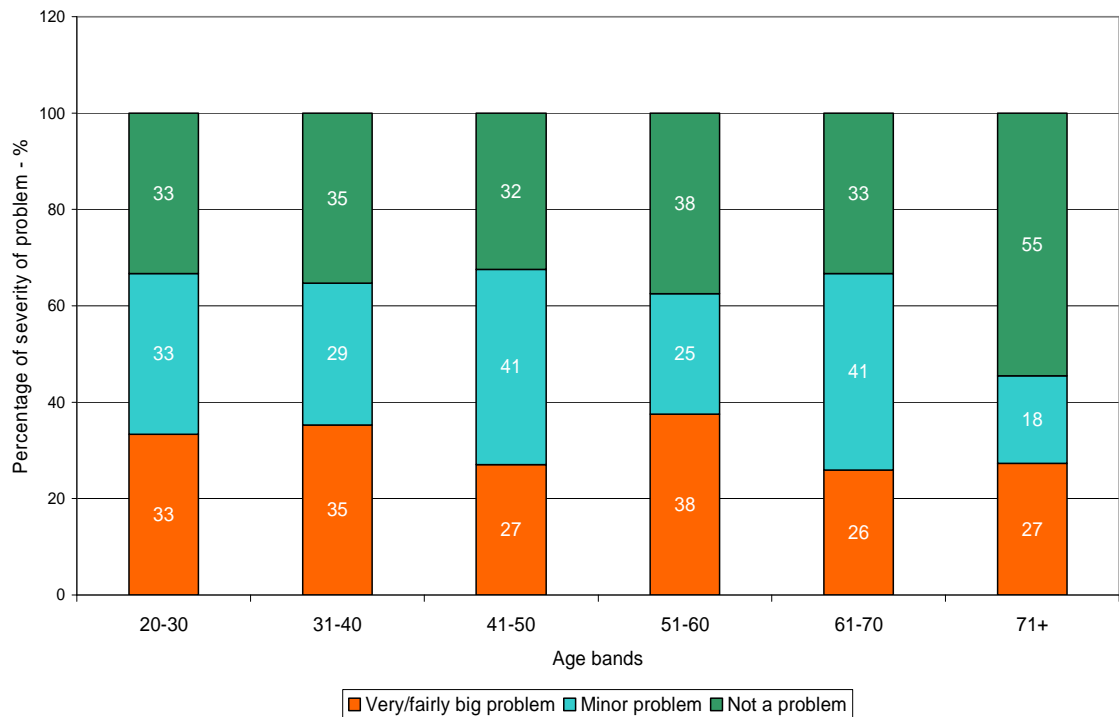


The BCS/CSEW suggest that there is a causal link between living in a deprived area and increased levels of ASB (for example, Upson, 2006). I comment below on some high level comparisons between my findings and IMD data; however a detailed correlation is beyond the scope of my thesis. Graph 5.1 above shows that a significant percentage of people in Locations E and WW said that THA was not a problem (Location E – 43%; Location WW – 51%) or was a minor problem (Location E – 29%; Location WW – 36%). However, comparing these two locations the percentage perceiving there to be a very/fairly big problem was 16 percentage points higher in Location E than in Location WW, despite the fact that the overall Index of Multiple Deprivation ranking in Location E was in the sixth decile, compared with Location WW in the fifth decile (a lower decile representing a higher level of deprivation). This may reflect the fact that a Dispersal Order, as mentioned earlier, was in force close to where some of the respondents lived in Location E. Interestingly, although in

Location KL only 17% of respondents perceived THA as not a problem, 34% perceived it as a very/fairly big problem; and this in a location ranked in the sixth decile for IMD. This contrasts markedly with the comparable very/fairly big problem score of 13% in Location WW, also in the sixth decile for IMD. In Location WC a relatively high percentage of respondents perceived THA as a very/fairly big problem – 64%. This correlates with the fact that although Location WC is classified in the fourth decile nationally in the overall IMD, it is classified in the second decile nationally for crime and disorder. The qualitative factors driving the varying relationships between these scores are examined in detail later in this chapter.

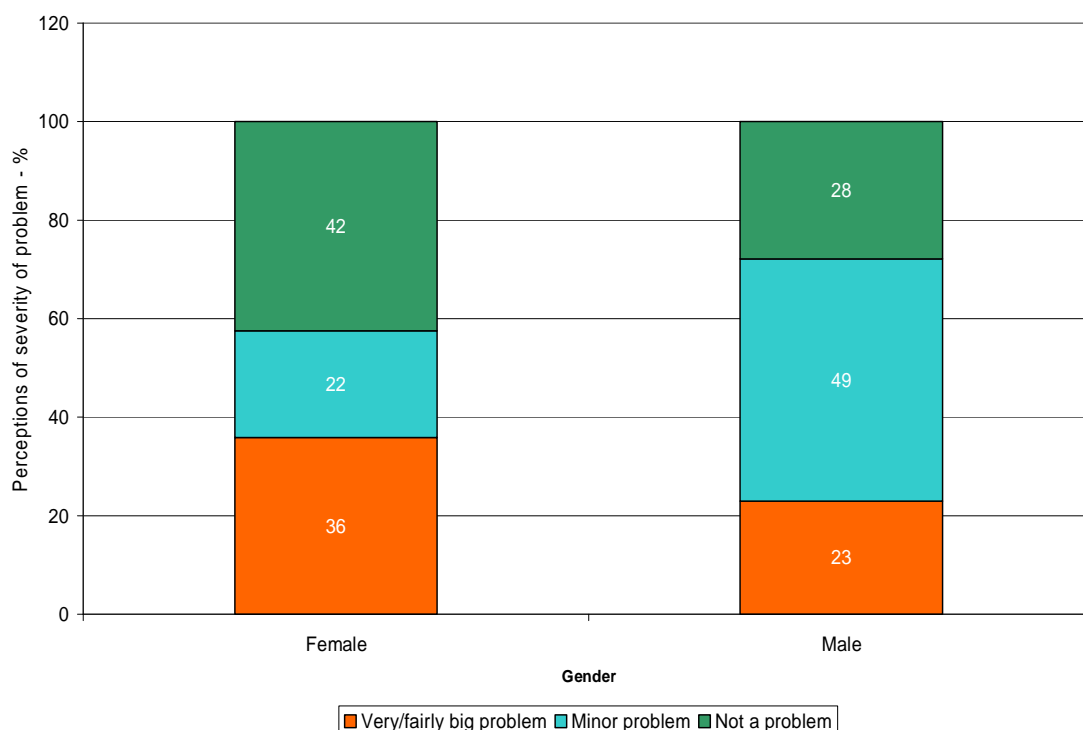
Drawing on the data represented in Graph 5.1, further analysis was undertaken to investigate whether respondents' perceptions of the severity of youth-related ASB varied between different age groups. Graph 5.2 below shows no strong, single trend or pattern; perceptions were fairly constant across age groups. One main exception was the age group 71+ with a significantly higher percentage than in other age groups viewing THA as not a problem. One other interesting point is that the perceptions of respondents in the age group 20-30 are similar to other groups (with the exception of 71+). Since they are closest in age to teenagers and had relatively recently experienced being a teenager, hence one might assume they would empathise with teenagers, but this is not the case.

Graph 5.2: Scale of Perceived Problem by Age Range of Adult Respondents in all Locations



Compared with the national data discussed in Chapter 2, my data showed a broadly similar picture for younger and middle-aged respondents. However the proportion of older residents perceiving THA as a very/fairly big problem was higher – 12 points higher for the oldest age group. Further, whilst the highest percentage result measured for a specific age group in the national data was 22 points (average of men and women) higher than the lowest, in my data the spread was much lower at 12 points. However, it was outside my scope to investigate reasons for these differences.

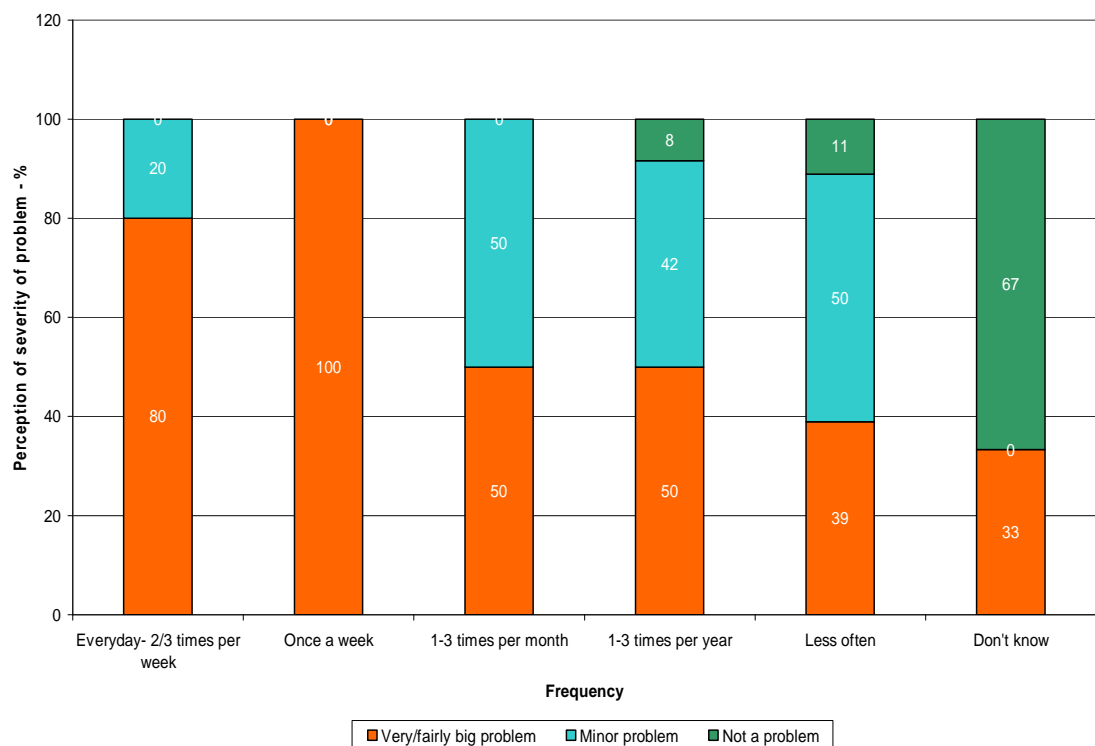
Graph 5.3: Scale of Perceived Problem by Gender of Adult Respondents in all Locations



Analysis of perceptions was also undertaken using gender as a variable. Graph 5.3 above shows that 36% of female respondents thought THA a very/fairly big problem compared with 23% of males. This analysis differs from the national statistics discussed in Chapter 2, which showed 30% of men and 31% of women perceiving THA as a very/fairly big problem. Since it went beyond the scope of this study to explore the reasons for this difference, and an appreciable proportion of men locally nevertheless viewed THA as a very/fairly big problem (23%), I took the view that this difference was within the bounds of local variations underlying the national average. Significantly more females than males perceived that THA was not a problem, 42% and 28% respectively. Of those taking the middle ground – perceiving THA as a minor problem – more than twice as many men held this view compared with females, 49% and 22% respectively, showing that females’ perceptions are more polarised than males’.

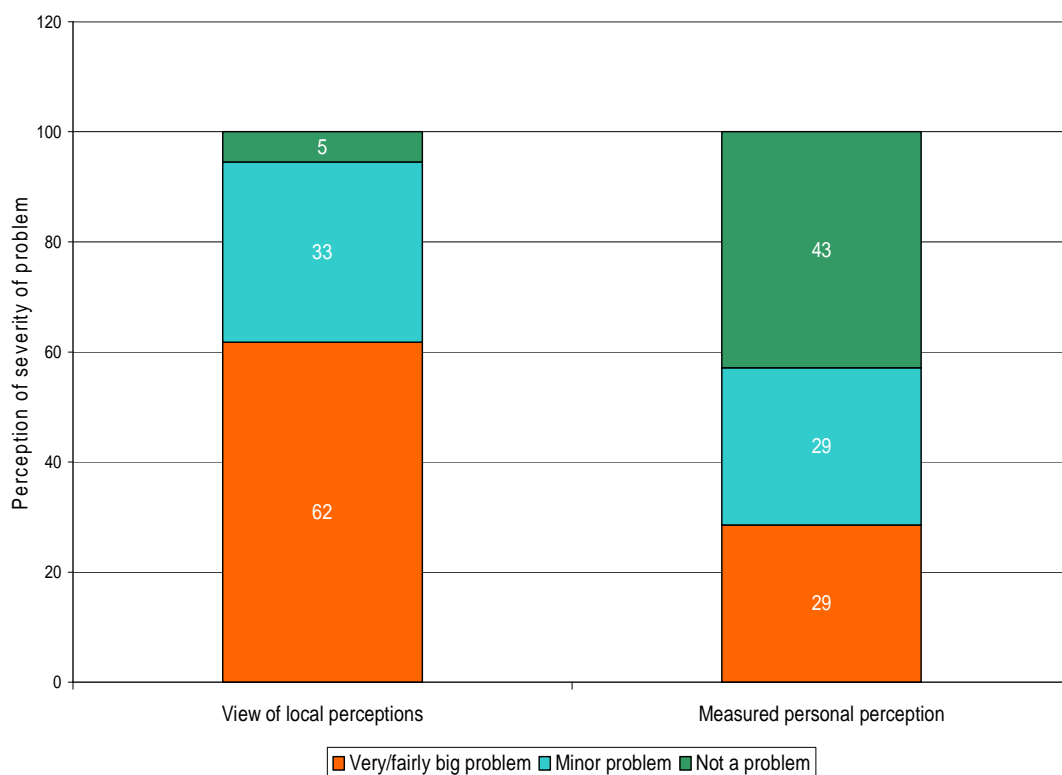
Included in the questionnaire was the question 'If you have had a negative experience, how often has this occurred?' Graph 5.4 below represents the findings from all locations combined. As might have been expected, respondents who perceived THA as a very/fairly big problem claimed that they had negative experiences frequently ('everyday/2-3times per week', or 'once a week'). However, 20% of those with negative experiences 'everyday/2-3times a week' categorised the behaviour as 'not a problem'. The reason for this might have been the nature of the behaviour and perceived low level of severity. This explanation may also be relevant in respect of the respondents who had negative experiences '1-3 times per month' but who perceived the problem to be minor. Conversely respondents who had negative experiences less frequently, '1-3 times year' or 'less often' (50% and 39% respectively), but who classified the behaviour as a very/fairly big problem may have been influenced by the nature of the behaviour being more serious. However, it may be that they are over-stating the problem relative to the frequency of their negative experiences; this would be behaviour similar to that which I go on to describe in relation to Graphs 5.5-5.7.

Graph 5.4: Frequency of negative experience – all locations

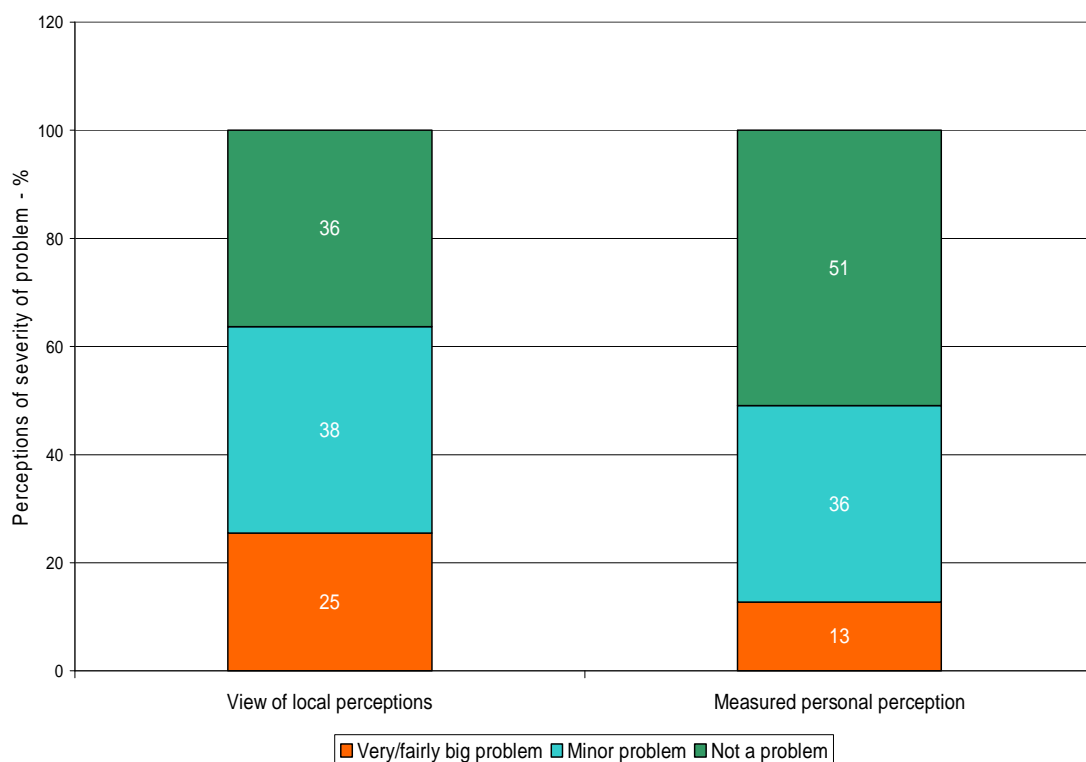


Question 2 of the questionnaire asked ‘In your area do you think adults view THA as a ‘very/fairly big problem’, minor problem’, ‘not a problem’. In the four graphs (Graphs 5.5-5.8) that follow I have analysed the data related to this question against the data contained in Graph 5.1 for each location individually. The data are labelled in the graphs as ‘View of local perceptions’ and ‘Measured personal perceptions’ respectively. Overall, respondents’ views of how others saw the situation were worse than the measured perceptions. In Location E 62% of respondents expected that the general view in the location would be a ‘very/fairly big problem’. The measured percentage of respondents with this view was much lower at 29%. There were similar mismatches in Location WW (25% expected versus 13% measured), and Location KL (54% expected versus 34% measured). Interestingly, in all three of these locations there was a relatively low level of anti-social behaviour.

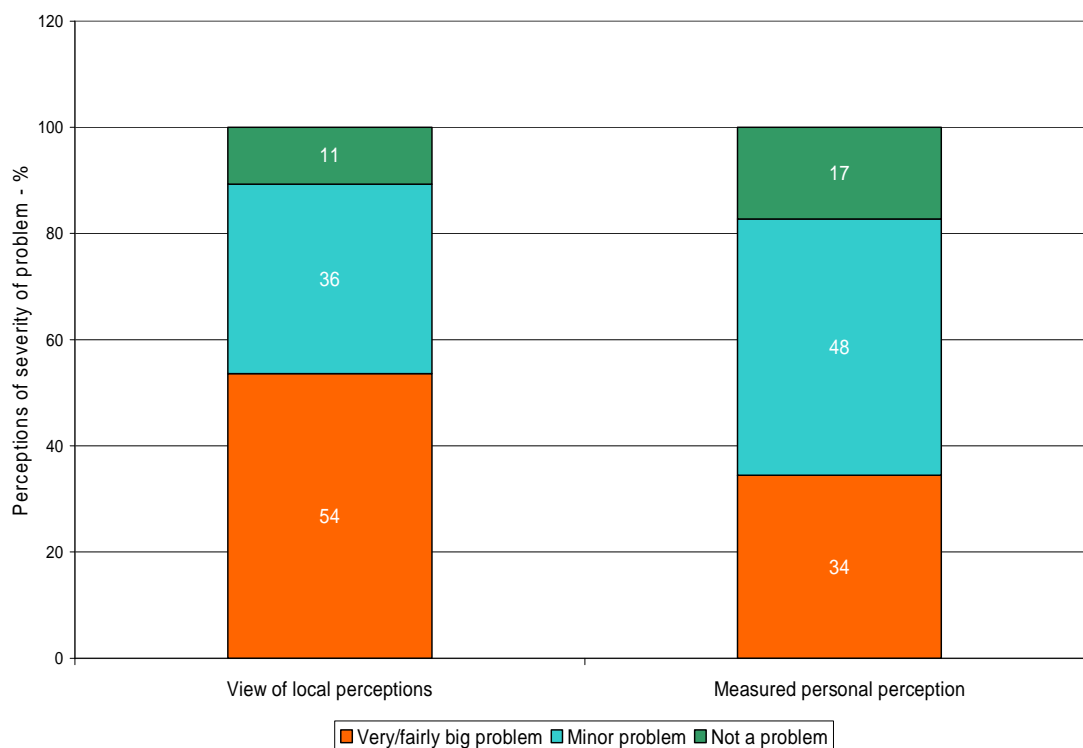
Graph 5.5: Respondents' perceptions of others' general perception against respondents' measured perception – Location E



Graph 5.6: Respondents' perceptions of others' general perception against respondents' measured perception – Location WW

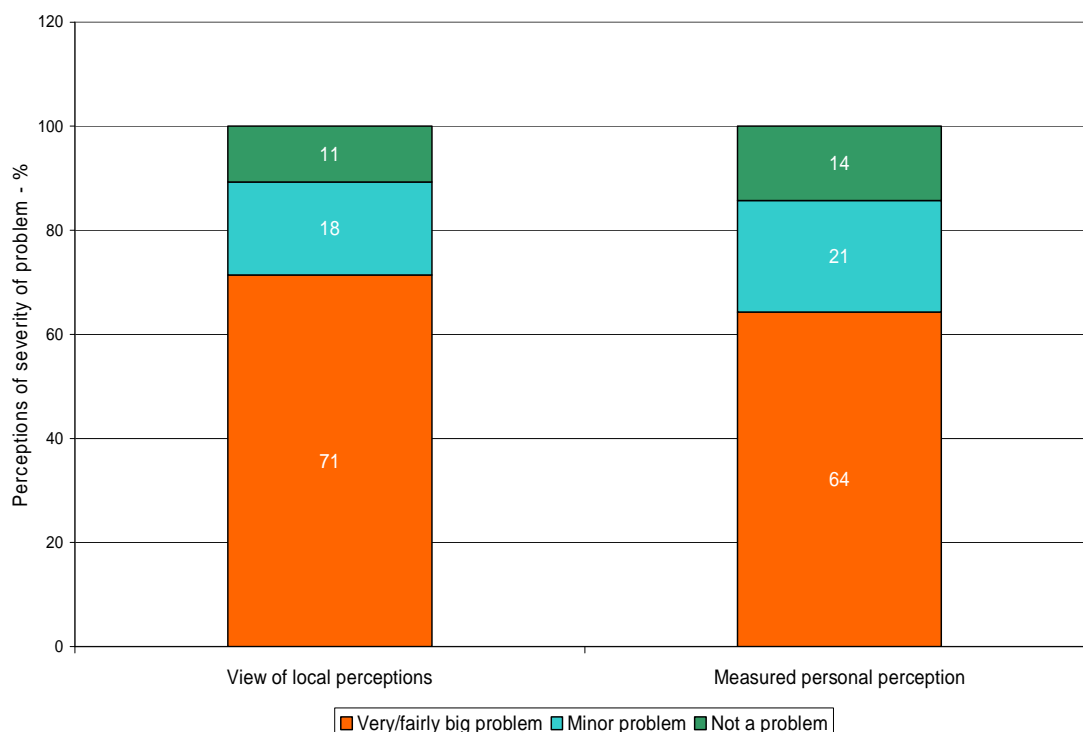


Graph 5.7: Respondents' perceptions of others' general perception against respondents' measured perception – Location KL



In Location WC (Graph 5.8 below), compared with the other locations, there was a much closer similarity between respondents' expected and measured perceptions, with 'very/fairly big problem' representing 71% and 64% respectively. Borough Council and Safer Neighbourhood Team data showed that Location WC had a more serious ASB problem than the other locations, with a relative incidence of ASB more than double that of Location KL (October 2009 to September 2010 data showed 10 incidents of ASB per 100 population in Location WC compared with 4.7 in Location KL).

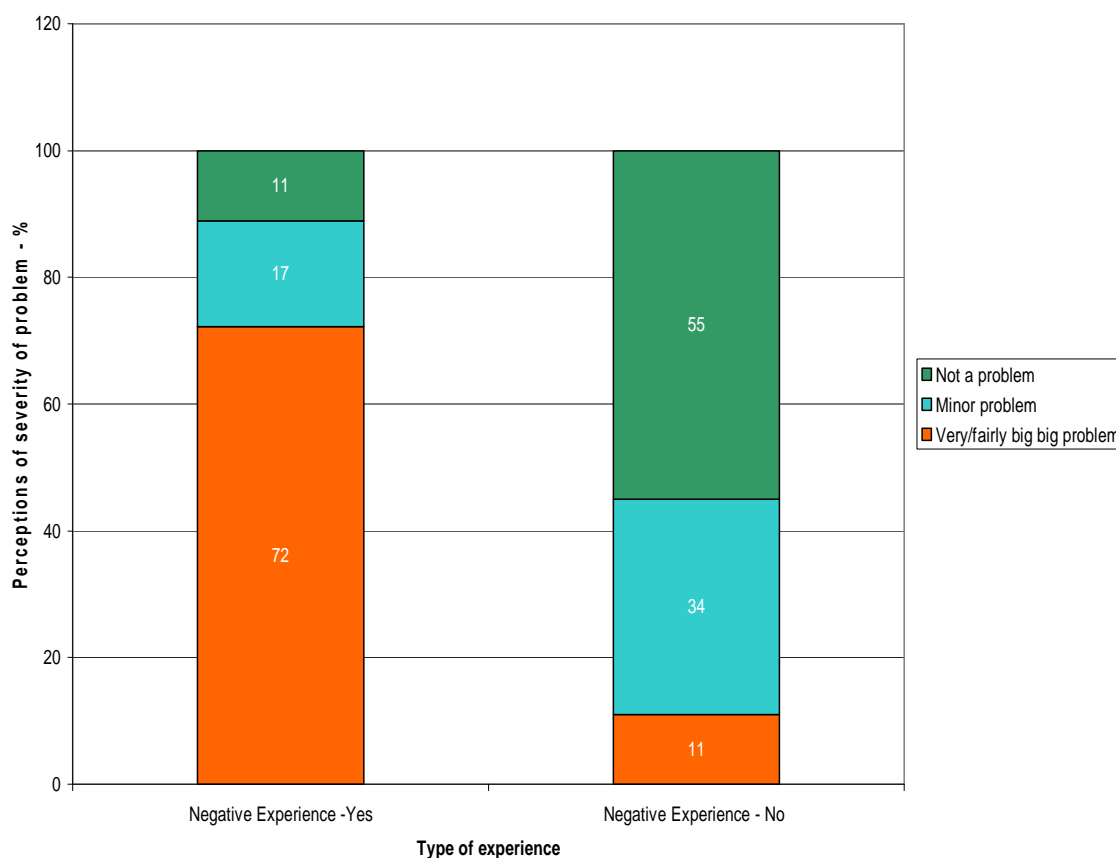
Graph 5.8: Respondents' perceptions of others' general perception against respondents' measured perception – Location WC



The contrast in this comparison between the three locations with less serious ASB issues and the location with a higher level of ASB is clear. In the former, residents significantly over-estimated the local perception of the extent of ASB problems. It may be that their outlook was influenced by what they read and saw in the news media, and assumed that problems were occurring but for others rather than themselves. In Location WC there were indications in the qualitative data discussed later in this chapter that the type of ASB may be more serious, as well as its frequency being higher, than in the other locations. It is possible that in Location WC a higher proportion of respondents had been personally affected by ASB or had knowledge of actual incidents, enabling them to base their assessment to a greater extent on experience rather than speculation.

Returning to respondents' personal perceptions of the scale of ASB in the area, in attempt to establish on what basis they formed their perceptions, respondents were asked about their experience of THA. The question in Locations E and WW was worded slightly differently to that asked in Locations KL and WC. For this reason the data from the last two locations are shown separately. The change in the question wording resulted from a recommendation made by UREC when I applied for ethical approval for the second phase of my research. The respondents in Location E and WW were invited to answer 'yes' or 'no' to the question posed 'Have you personally had a negative experience of teenagers hanging around?' As Graph 5.9 demonstrates, overall there was a strong correlation between respondents' perceptions of the problem being very/fairly big and having a negative experience. However, particularly interesting was that not all people's perceptions of the level of the problem seemed to be linked to them directly experiencing a negative incident. Eleven percent of respondents claimed not to have had a negative experience yet their personal view was that it was a very/fairly big problem. One interpretation might be that it reflects respondents' empathy with the local situation despite not personally having had a negative experience. Also, interestingly, 28% of respondents who had had a negative experience placed the scale of the problem as either a 'minor problem' or 'not a problem'; this may reflect the low severity of the behaviour experienced.

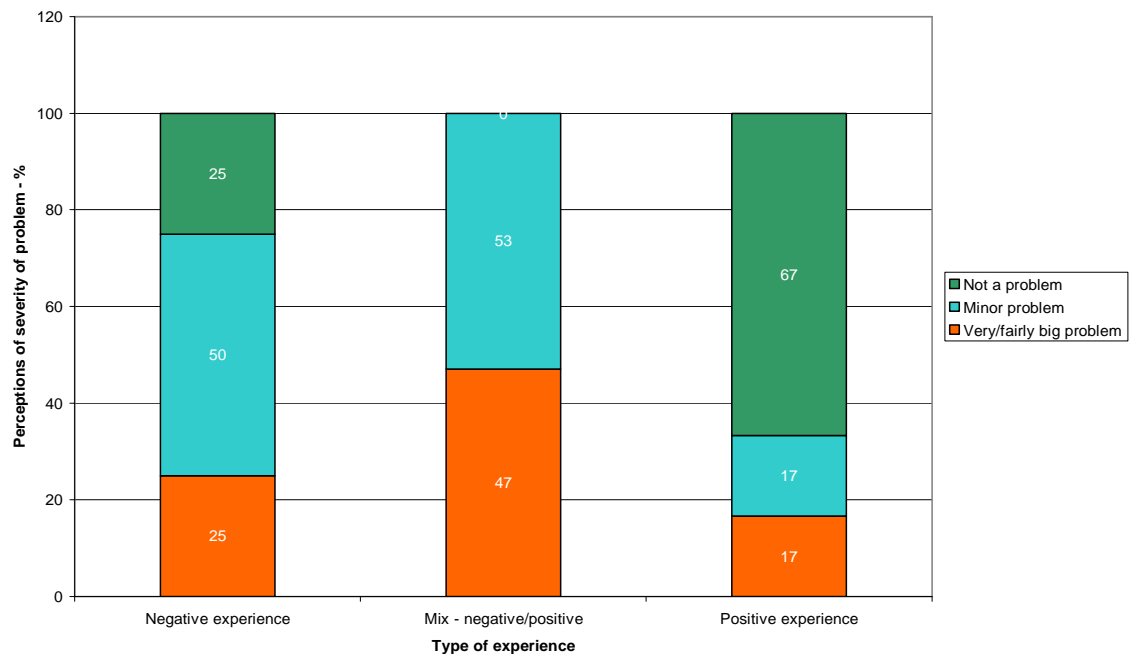
Graph 5.9: Respondents' perceptions of the severity of the problem against personal negative experience – Locations E and WW Combined.



Note: Two respondents who perceived the problem to be minor did not complete the question relating to negative experience, and as a result of this have been excluded from the numbers included in the graph.

Respondents in Locations KL and WC were asked 'How would you generally describe your experience of teenagers hanging around?' The response options were 'negative', 'positive', 'mix of negative and positive'.

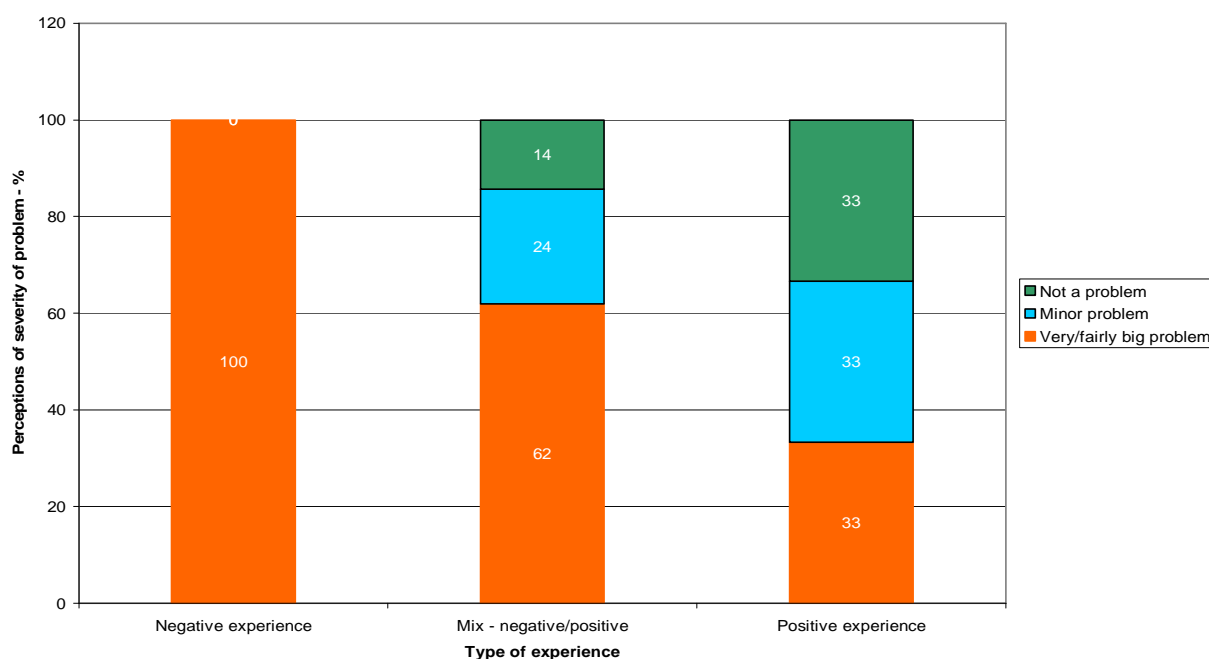
Graph 5.10: Respondents' perceptions of the severity of the problem against personal experience – Location KL



Noteworthy in Graph 5.10 above is the low percentage of respondents who perceived THA as a very/fairly big problem despite describing their personal experience of THA as 'negative'. This suggests that respondents who had negative experiences were more 'tolerant' of YP in Location KL than in Locations E and WW. It was also interesting that 47% of respondents described having a mix of positive and negative experiences but felt that THA was a very/fairly big problem. The assumption being made here is that the mix of experiences was skewed towards negative rather than positive. Surprisingly, as many as 25% of those having negative experiences responded 'not a problem'. The same explanation as that given for a similar response by 11% in Graph 5.9 might be applicable here also; the behaviour experienced may have been low in severity. A final comment relates to the 34% of respondents who described their experiences as positive but nevertheless placed the severity of the problem of THA within the very/fairly big or minor problem (17% in each category). The explanation might echo that advanced regarding Graph 5.9; that

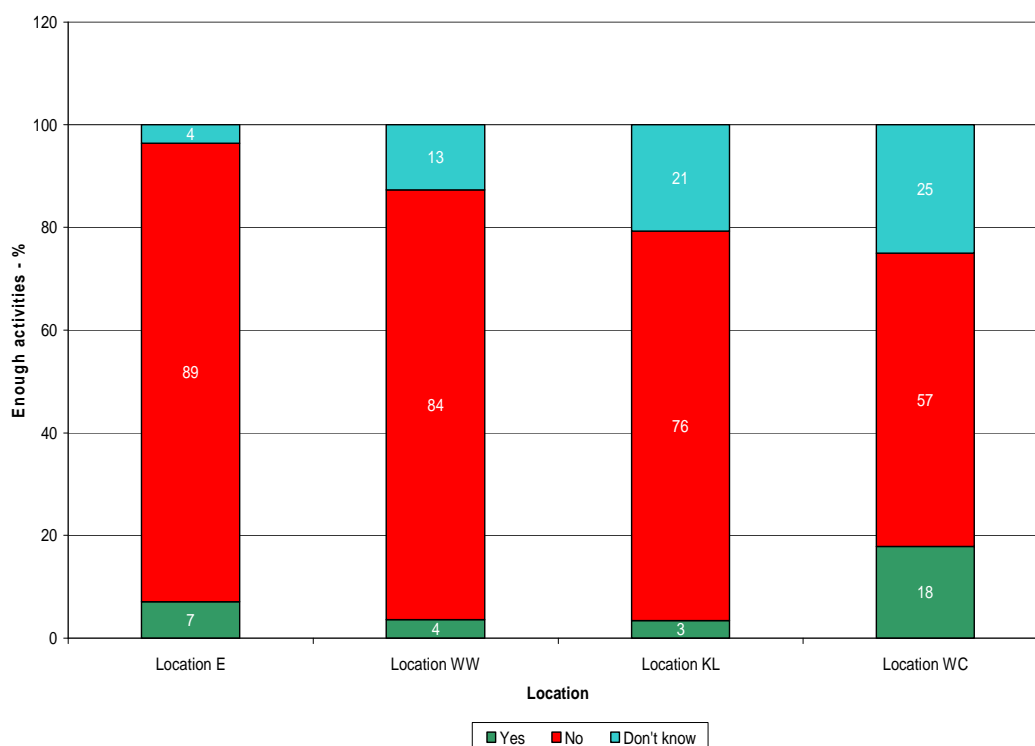
is respondents' empathy for the local situation despite not personally having negative experiences.

Graph 5.11: Respondents' perceptions of the severity of the problem against personal negative experience – Locations WC



Compared with Graph 5.10 the data represented in Graph 5.11 is striking because all of the respondents who had negative experiences only viewed THA as a very/fairly big problem. This reflects the severity of the situation as depicted in Graph 5.1, the relatively high incidence of ASB shown by SNT data discussed earlier in this chapter, and correlations between the quantitative data and qualitative data which are discussed later in this chapter. In all three columns there are more respondents perceiving the problems a very/fairly big problem than in Location KL regardless of whether or not any positive experiences had occurred. The percentage of residents who claimed to have had only 'positive experience' but nevertheless perceived the problem to be very/fairly big was nearly twice as high in Location WC than in Location KL (33% and 17% respectively).

Graph 5.12: Response to the question ‘In your area do you think there are enough activities for young people’.



Finally, the question was asked ‘In your area do you think there are enough activities for young people?’ Overwhelmingly Graph 5.12 demonstrates that respondents viewed there not to be, this will be discussed further in conjunction with the qualitative data later in this chapter. However, one interesting statistic is that 18% of respondents in Location WC, ranked nationally within the fourth decile of the IMD, felt that there were sufficient activities.

These data began to illuminate the perceived problem, although they did not reveal “the qualitative difference concealed in the ‘basket’ of incivilities making up the index of anti-social behaviour” (Burney, 2009, p12). Qualitative data analysis, to which I now turn, helped to address this shortcoming. In the early stages of analysis, based on the inductive approach, open coding was completed. Initially, I purposely kept the four groups of data separate to

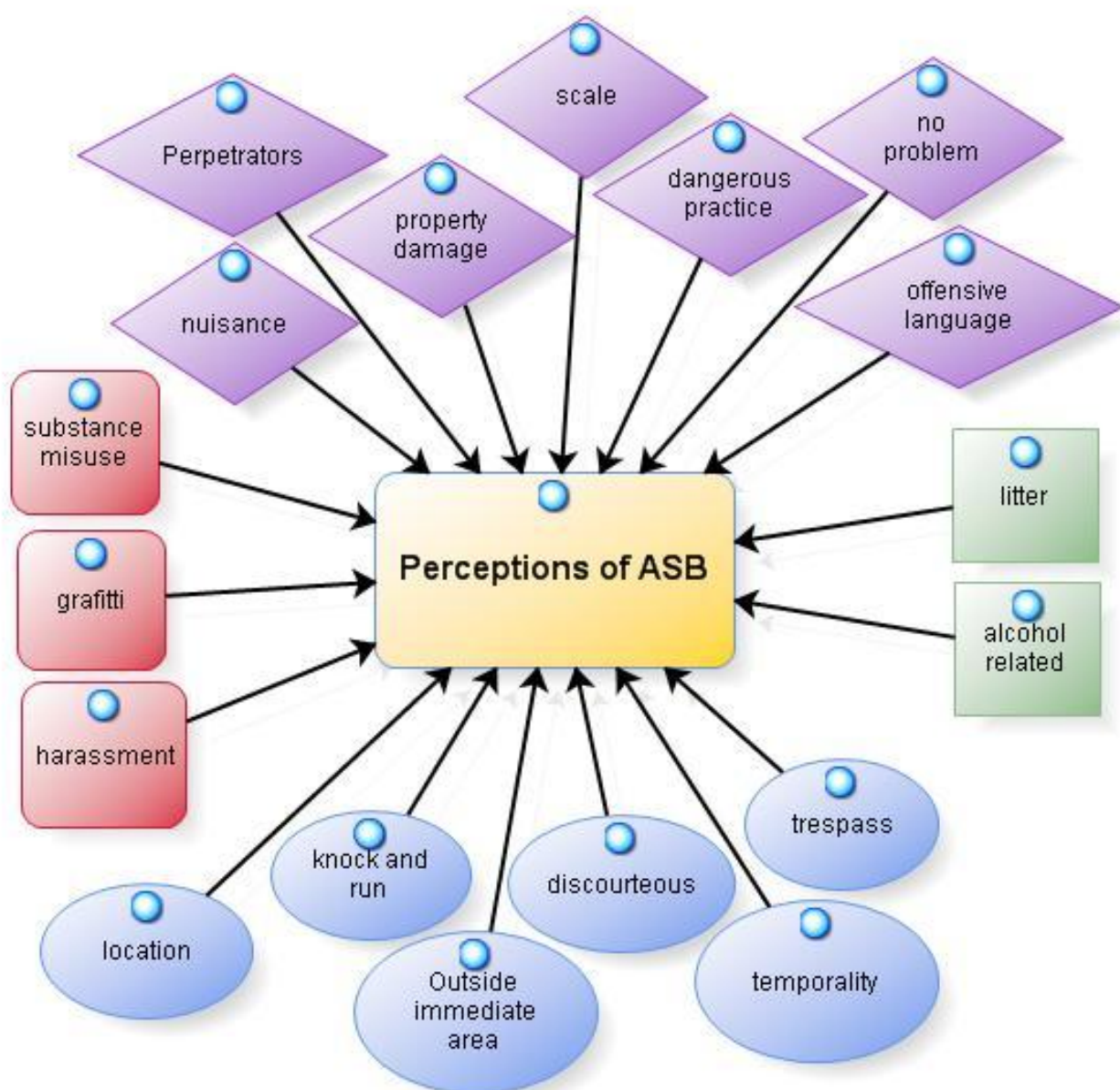
facilitate “unique patterns of each one to emerge ... and ... a rich familiarity with each case which, in turn, accelerates cross-case comparison” (Eisenhardt, 2002, p.18).

Subsequently, descriptive themes emerged. Figure 5.1 below features the types of YP behaviour which residents considered anti-social. As with some of the quantitative data, qualitative data from Locations E and WW are grouped together. Some behaviours figured in two or more locations, although to variable extents, represented in Figure 5.1 by purple diamond shaped nodes. The remaining nodes represent data for individual locations. The green rectangles depict data from Locations E and WW; the blue ellipse nodes relate to data collected in Location KL. Finally, the red rounded rectangles represent data from Location WC.

In discussing the findings I start with behaviours occurring in multiple locations (purple diamonds in Figure 5.1), with appropriate cross-reference to themes specific to individual locations. Remaining themes will then be covered by location. In this and following chapters participants’ reported speech is generally shown in a box.

Adult Residents' Perceptions of ASB – Qualitative Data

Figure 5.1: Emergent themes relating to residents' perceptions of youth-related ASB



Problems common to two or more locations

Nuisance

I have used 'nuisance' to encapsulate various behaviours and activities that did not cause intentional physical harm or would not officially be construed as serious acts of ASB resulting in vandalism, defined as "intentional and malicious damage to either the home, other property or vehicles" (Home Office, 2011a, p29). Rather, 'nuisance' behaviour is likely to cause irritation, annoyance or offence.

The problem behaviour raised most often, and figuring in all locations, related to ball games being played in residential areas; in particular football. Surprisingly, football did not appear in Location WW data, whereas the BC had previously cited it as a frequent complaint there. This might be explained by the focus group taking place in February when it is reasonable to assume that there were fewer YP outdoors. The other focus groups took place either in mid or late summer, when outdoor ball games were more likely.

The frequency of football being a problem varied between locations. In Location WC it occurred only once; a young boy once causing a nuisance by "kicking a football against [a participant's] door". In the Location E focus group the consensus was that football was a source of irritation, often inappropriately "played up and down outside the pub, in the middle of the road". One participant had directly experienced the effect of youths playing football:

E-C: They [youths] used to play football outside and the older ones used to kick the ball into the window.
--

However, her further comment suggested that the level of irritation and annoyance she felt was negligible:

Int: And how did that make you feel?

E-C: Well it don't bother me. No no.

In contrast to the limited mention of football in Locations WC and E, it caused considerable irritation to four households in Location KL. One focus group participant's comment encapsulated these householders' sentiments, stating that:

KL-MP: Football is the main, you know, one of the worst problems.

Another participant reinforced this opinion saying:

KL-MJ: I would just like to add actually that it's not the children hanging around with their bikes or riding past with their bikes. Or even playing in their own front gardens; it's the football. I mean they can go past on their bikes and play.

A data source which further confirmed football as an irritant for several residents was correspondence between one affected resident and the Regional Neighbourhood Watch Co-ordinator. In an email the resident complained about "the ongoing football problem", and included a diary of events listing when she had been disturbed by YP playing football on 7 out of 8 days.

Prima facie it appeared that the irritation caused to the residents was children playing football per se. However, closer examination of the data revealed more specific irritants, such as the children's inability to control the ball. One

participant, emailing the Regional Neighbourhood Watch Co-ordinator, complained that:

KL-MJ: The ball comes across my garden. It hit the garage at one side, the fence at the other side.

Similar data came from a focus group participant:

KL-AC: What annoys me is when they kick the football and it goes across your garden. I've seen a football hit a lady's car in front of my house, bounced on the top so thud, you know, I've sort of sat up and I've seen it hit the caravan up the road.

Whilst the quote above suggests that the actions described are accidental, she went on to suggest that some of the children's behaviour with the football was intentional:

KL-AC: I've seen them actually kicking it at the next door house which is empty, which is an RAF house. They kick it at the garage door and at the house. Don't they? [Others sitting in close proximity to the participant nodded in agreement].

Emanating from the data a further football-related irritant was *noise* caused by the ball bouncing, a specific issue voiced by three participants:

KL-AC: The noise of the football. It's that thud, thud, thud, thud and you know when they're there, straightaway you get to listen for it don't you I've got to say.

KL-MP: It's the thud, thudding of the ball,

KL-MJ: Not the noise of them shouting or anything; I put up with the shouting. I cannot drown out the noise of this ball and football and it's the noise of the bouncing that really does my head in.

Another participant raised different noise-related behaviour which she considered to be anti-social. This consisted of youths old enough to drive cars and the noise they created in driving and/or playing music in their cars.

KL-BF: They tend to stop at the end of our road and then they fly at the end of the road, and I have to say my main issue sometimes is we have a pizza parlour behind us and you get people screeching around, tyres, loud music that you hear thump, thump and for me, that is what annoys me. It's evening and all I can hear is music thumping, cars squealing.

Interestingly no other participants added anything to the quote above, and the discussion reverted to noise-related problems caused by children playing football. The focus on this activity by some members of the focus group and tone in which they spoke about it clearly indicated that, for a few, this was a major issue.

Although not related to football, noise as a problem was also mentioned in Locations E and WW. Within the door to door questionnaire data in Location E, three respondents complained about the disturbance caused by excessive noise made by young people. One considered that the noise made by YP near their home disturbed their “relaxation time”. Two questionnaire respondents claimed that they were subjected to unwelcome noise on a **daily basis**; however, the third was referring to **one** particular incident in the previous twelve months. Specific to Location E, focus group data highlighted a previous noise-related problem resulting from youths using mopeds:

E-P: When my son was that age they were all turning sixteen and they were getting mopeds because they were all going round [name of area in village] and pipping their hooters and revving and carrying on so I think it was a bit of a bad ...

Location WW data suggested that noise related problems occasionally occurred as groups of youths walked home from the pub. One focus group participant cited an incident two to three weeks previously:

WW-P: A group of lads came past, and they came past screaming and shouting at each other saying you know (p) what they were going to do to somebody if they got hold of them (slight laugh) all this sort of thing.

Another activity coded under the theme of nuisance was *egging*, mentioned in all locations except for Location WC. This term described YP throwing eggs and flour at people's houses; an activity often associated with Halloween trick or treat in October. However, in this case it was not only confined to this time of year. In Location E the number of people mentioning this did not reflect the number directly affected, rather it mainly reflected participants' knowledge of one woman in Location E being the frequent victim. In the course of data collection via the door to door questionnaire I had a brief discussion with the woman in question. Whilst unwilling to complete a questionnaire she did speak of continually being the victim of egging by local youths. I will return to the potential reasons for this 'victimisation' later in this chapter.

The data from focus group participants in Location E indicated general agreement that egging was 'youngsters just having a bit of fun' and that 'they meant no harm by it', whilst one participant in Location WW interpreted it as more concerning:

WW-P: There are a group of youngsters, four or five boys I think who come from further down the village and they have been causing quite a lot of trouble in the last few weeks with egg throwing and damage and one thing and another.

In Location KL, egging was raised as a problem by only one person making brief reference to having had direct experience; nothing in the data suggested it was a frequent problem.

Property Damage

Also emerging from the data as a problem was the theme of property damage caused by YP. In some instances this was connected with playing football, particularly in Location KL. The data included examples of damage to houses, although the degree to which this had occurred was difficult to establish. One focus group participant said:

KL-JH: Quite a bit of damage done to the houses, but nobody seems to care, who owns them.

A neighbour of the above participant more accurately quantified the extent of the problem:

KL-AC: There's been two windows broken. One next door to us on [name of road] and opposite me a lady's door was smashed by a football.

Whilst these participants were concerned about the damage caused to others' property, their main complaint was the damage caused to their gardens.

KL-MJ: They're [the children] damaging our plants

KL-JH: Well damage to fences and hedges. Lots of things like that. We've had hedges smashed up. I'm FED UP with footballers ruining my garden.

The data clearly indicated that damage to property had occurred as a result of children playing football near to some residents' houses. However, there was also data that highlighted residents' concerns about potential rather than actual

property damage occurring. These fears related to football but also to a toy local children owned and played with outdoors which was referred to as “a rocket thing that whizzes backwards and forwards”.

KL-MJ: We are frightened to death of where it's going to, anything's going to land. We couldn't leave our cars out, because our cars are damaged; you know, COULD be damaged.

What is interesting about the quote above is that the final sentence clearly demonstrates the participant’s fear of damage is based on perceptions of what could happen rather than having suffered actual damage to her car. When I asked if damage had been caused to anyone’s car no one could give an example of an incident. The participant in the quote above replied “mine's always in the garage”.

A similar concern for potential damage rather than actual figured in the Location WW door-to-door questionnaire data. Local children had permission to play football on the school field after school hours, but a nearby resident complained that:

Q-WW40: I live opposite the school and see football coming over the fence after school and could easily hit house windows and cars.

In the other three locations, especially Locations E and WC, data emerged that represented research participants’ concerns about YP actually causing property damage. In Location E there had been damage to private gardens where plants had been broken; in public space outside the village shop plants and planters had been damaged, blamed on YP as it was a favourite place for them to congregate. A questionnaire respondent complained about youths riding mini-

motorbikes through a walkway and ‘smashing up gardens’. Following a two-day village event at the recreation ground, items left out overnight had been either removed or damaged. On separate occasions a tree and a communal grassy area were damaged; the former was interpreted as deliberate, whereas the latter was described as “thoughtless, mindless damage by a girl horse-riding on the green”. Other property damage which respondents perceived as intentional related to a broken window at the village hall, and “a girl trying to demolish railings outside the village pub”.

Similarly in Location WW damage to an older resident’s garden gate and fence, damage to the bus shelter, and building a fire on grassland were perceived as deliberate.

In Location WC, the property-related ASB by YP cited in the data was based on direct experiences of participants or seeing the damage caused after the event. The first scenario involved a boy, described by two participants as ‘only being a little lad, but he’s really, really cheeky’. He earned disapproval by causing damage climbing a tree next to the participants’ garden:

WC-P3: He was climbing the branches one day wasn't he?

WC-P1: Breaking them off.

WC-P3: Breaking them off and chucking them in our garden.

WC-P1: He killed the tree off.

One of these participants also described an incident of damage to his car parked outside his house. Understandably, whilst providing details of the damage caused, he was clearly very upset and angry:

WC-P1: I had my window put through. A young lad with a bit of 3 be 3 come and put every window through on my car. He smashed all the pillar bits up, like up to your roof.

Participants also complained strongly that a recently built local leisure centre, opened only some three to four months previously, had been vandalised:

WC-P2: And it's been vandalised already.

WC-P1: I mean, it's all new hi-tech gym equipment. It's actually sponsored by, is it Nike?

WC-P2: I'm not sure. But it had a lovely sail, sail to, so that they could, you know, for shade. But they've burnt the sail down.

WC-P1: Yeh, they set fire to the rubber floor, they even stolen some of it.

WC-P2: They've even started digging it up. So that's within three months.

This was relatively recent, but a similar theme of vandalism emerged from the data, suggesting there was an ongoing problem in the local shopping precinct which was blamed for shop closures:

WC-P1: It's like the precinct here; the shops. They've all closed down because they were getting vandalised, they were getting their windows smashed. They've [the shopkeepers] just had enough.

Dangerous Practice

Other questionnaire and focus group data in all locations highlighted some participants' concerns about perceived ASB which could jeopardise people's safety. In some instances the concern was for perpetrators' safety; alternatively the focus was on the potential danger to others. With regard to the former, a respondent to the questionnaire reported once seeing youths "building a moat" on nearby grassland which the witness interpreted as a risk to the youths' safety

rather than anti-social per se. She described feeling 'anxious' about witnessing the youths' behaviour, although did not attempt to stop them but mentioned 'keeping an eye on them'.

There was significantly more data about potential danger to others. This data mainly emanated from Locations KL and WC, plus a single brief reference in Location E relating to horse-riding. Not only was this perceived as anti-social because of the damage caused, but was deemed dangerous practice because the area was generally used by children as a play venue.

The Location WC focus group participants expressed concern about a group of youths who congregated locally on the corner of two roads and played a game described as 'flip the coin at the curbs'. This involved trying to flip the coin to the curb on the other side of the road in such a way as to make it rebound. Part of the participants' concern was for the youth's disregard for their own safety:

WC-P1: And they're just willy nilly over the road and if you're down there with a car they don't care, they'll just stand in the road.

However, data shows that participants were also concerned for their own safety:

WC-P1: They'll not let you past um, if you try and force your way past or say anything they give you abuse. They throw stuff at your car, stones, yeh, anything they can pick up and they throw it into the road, throw it at your car, they don't care. They just literally DO NOT care.

Data suggests that participants who had experienced this type of behaviour felt unable to deal with the situation and the preferred course of action was to avoid driving in the area:

WC-P1: You just cannot get literally get past, you have to go round the other way. Because you just get everything back off them; they'll smash your car up or whatever.

There was an evident concern about the potential danger associated with this activity, and that at some stage somebody would be injured:

WC-P3: I'm surprised somebody hasn't bin killed on that road. Aren't you?

WC-P2: It's a matter of time. [WC-P3: It is]. A matter of time.

Data emanating from the focus group in Location KL also demonstrated participants' concerns about the risk of harm to children and pets locally:

KL-JC: I was just going to mention, there's been a lot of near misses [on the roads] with small children actually. I've witnessed one or two.

One participant identified a young driver in particular who she described as “an absolute maniac”. Subsequent to this the discussion became very animated and it was difficult to decipher exactly what was being said verbatim. However, the general gist of the discussion was that this person was a problem; everyone agreed that he drove too fast and the only reason why he had not been reported to the police was failure to get his car registration number. One participant's comments that were decipherable clearly indicated the sort of behaviour being referred to, its potential consequences, and the attitude of the perpetrator:

KL-SD: I got him one day he pulled out in front of my house and my husband saw him nearly hit [our next door neighbour's cat] one day and just started laughing.

This participant was not only concerned for the safety of pets, but also that of children playing in the area, as the quote below demonstrates:

KL-SD: This is [someone in their late teens early twenties] in a car, and if there are any children playing, you know, he really speeds up and screeches round the corner in front of us. I think he's showing off.

Offensive Language

The data from three of the locations raised the issue of offensive language used by YP, particularly verbal abuse meted out when adults try to prevent ASB. In Location WC, this arose regarding the youths who congregated to play 'flip the coin' and also one particular boy discussed earlier who had been asked not to kick a football at the participant's front-door:

WC-P1: They give you abuse; you just get everything off them.

WC-P1: Then he was kicking the football at my door, so I just went out and said to him in a nice way, do you mind stop kicking the football and we got a load of abuse from him.

Data from a respondent in Location E suggested that he had suffered verbal abuse over a period of time leading him to move from the village:

Q-E12: Young people extremely abusive and moving as a result.

Whilst this type of behaviour was only raised by one participant in each of the three locations, data suggested that it had a significant impact on those who experienced it as demonstrated above and in the following quote:

KL-MJ: It's the verbal abuse that I'm getting, of me personally that makes me feel very strongly about it.

Another participant disapproved of offensive language in a different context, namely not being able to avoid hearing it in public places generally:

KL-SD: The only thing I don't like is the bad language. I do feel they should have some respect. And ok, if they want to use that language amongst themselves, but when an adult walks past I don't think they should be shouting abusive things at each other; not at the adults, but at each other.

In contrast, Location WC could put up with such behaviour:

WC-P2: This sitting on the wall and laughing and swearing as well; that, you can tolerate that really.

WC-P1: That's pretty much the norm with kids nowadays anyway.

Perpetrators

A theme that emerged from the focus group in all locations was the perceived profile of *perpetrators*. In the data from Location WC the number of youths involved was estimated at between 7-12, with the youths involved in 'flipping the coin' referred to earlier apparently not only those living locally:

WC-P1: They come from all over. They come from further afield. Yeh. They're just all mates and they just join up.

The data included estimates of the age ranges involved; firstly regarding the motorbike-related problems:

WC-P1: They range from about what, 13 up to 17, 18 year old.

The participant who had described an unpleasant situation on a bus (discussed in more detail later in this chapter) thought the assailants were aged between 13 and 16.

The data from Location KL identified YP involved in the football-related behaviour as being "at big school". One participant who claimed that it was

“bigger lads who caused most of the problems” qualified this further by suggesting that it was “12 and 13 year olds [who] were the worst ones”. A lot of the complaints centred on one particular large family; one participant felt that:

KL-JH: It was difficult for us because err you know we had the 7 kids next door.

However, it was acknowledged by complainants that the nuisance behaviour could not solely be blamed on this family:

KL-JH: It's not always their kids at that house, the kids next door who cause all the damage.

Despite the statement above, a subsequent telephone interview with one focus group participant who was a friend and neighbour of the family suggested that the blame was predominantly directed towards them:

KL-BF: It seemed to be aimed towards my next door neighbours more than any of the other kids even though they are pretty much equally playing out there (laughs).

In fact the data contained frequent references to this particular family as the problem, although it was also acknowledged that other children were involved:

KL-JH: It's just people playing there you know. All the kids on the estate congregate there; there could be anything up to 12-14 children out there at times. We've had hedges smashed up err but it nearly always been somebody who's been playing there you know.

KL-MJ: All the kids gather there. The thing is, it's the same few kids all the time.

At one point in the focus group some participants felt unhappy that the blame was being solely directed at RAF families. One participant went so far as to suggest that she found this emphasis ‘offensive’:

KL-SD: I was just, I mean I'm an ex army family and I just find a little bit offensive that it seems to be directed at forces children.

The response to the above quote was:

KL-MJ: It's several, several families.

KL-JH: But it isn't all RAF families that – two or three RAF families and two or three private ones.

The above quote from two of the complainants reduced the animosity clearly being felt by some members of the focus group, but interestingly data from a later telephone interview with a focus group participant suggested in fact that:

KL-BF: I think the majority of the children the other residents were moaning about were RAF children unfortunately; though not all of them (laughs).

Overall the Location E focus group implied that youths in their early to mid teens were the main perpetrators of ASB. However, at one point participants started to reallocate the blame primarily to older individuals. For example, when talking about the property damage caused following the village outdoor event it was suggested that “in all fairness that's not the teenagers, it's the older ones ... that are there later on at night”. It was suggested that the imposition of a dispersal order in the vicinity of the village hall was unnecessary because the majority of problems occurring at the village hall were at public functions such as weddings and parties rather than due to youths congregating. Later, a further conversation between the participants echoed the sentiments that older individuals were to blame:

E-K: But again what you said about old ones. On a Sunday morning outside the pub, they congregate out there. You know, I mean, you've got grown men out there playing football in the road, up and down outside the pub. Now THEY'RE NOT teenagers and youngsters, they're ADULTS.

E-P: I'll tell you sumet else as well. The men leave more mess down that playing field on a Saturday than what them youngsters ever do [K: yeh] empty

bottles, cans, empty bottle beers, rubbish everywhere [K: yeh]. You don't get that from the younger ones. [K: no that's right].

A third reference to teenagers not being the main culprits of ASB was made by another participant who lives near one of the village pubs and suffers noise-related ASB:

E-C: Yeh, that's ever so noisy and you get them shouting at night-time. I can hear them at one o'clock in the morning sometimes, swearing and everything. They come out of the side of the pub there swearing.

E-K: But they're not the teenagers are they?

E-C: I don't know who they are because I don't look. No, they're not teenagers.

Also in relation to this discussion around reallocation of blame, data emerged which suggested participants felt a sense of hypocrisy on the part of adults who they perceived to be the main culprits of ASB:

E-P: But once again you're talking about the older people that are moaning that the teenagers are acting in a way that they're [the older people] acting.

E-K: They're the ones that are giving teenagers a bad name (p) because they're not the teenagers and the youngsters, they're the ones that have been in the pub all night.

A similar kind of discussion about identifying perpetrators took place at the focus group in Location WW, but rather than the blame being pinpointed at an older age group in this instance it was directed towards groups of temporary residents:

E-P: But what I suspect from what I've been able to gather from somebody who lives further down the village these are groups of people who've come and are being housed at [name of small housing estate] and may well stay for a short time and then move on again.

In relation to the problem of 'egging' in Location WW, whilst blame was not attributed to 'temporary residents', it was linked to youths living on the housing estate referred to in the quote above. This part of the village was highlighted by LA personnel during my guided tour preceding the research. They described it as a run down ex-council estate from which a considerable number of problems emanated.

Interestingly, both Locations E and WW focus group participants also came to the defence of local youngsters in various other ways. For example, they stressed that in their view the perpetrators were a *minority* of youngsters, with the majority well behaved:

WW-P: But there are nice kids. I go up to school fairly often and meet them and umm there are some very very very, the vast majority are reasonable children shall I say.

In similar vein, to the approval of all attendees, a Location E focus group participant reiterated this view:

E-K: 99% of the time they're behaving very well. You get the odd one or two that are a bit loutish, but on the whole.

Closely related to this was participants' concern that YP were often negatively stereotyped; as one resident put it in reference to how the actions of one or two youths taints adult perceptions generally:

E-K: Yeh, but then everybody picks up on it don't they, and then they start blaming everybody [P and S: yeh]. They're tarring them all with the same brush but you can't do that.

At both focus groups this theme developed into a brief discussion of how media coverage of YP negatively influences adults' perceptions:

E-P: I think also you read so much in the press that that also (p) that you translate into your own environment? Reading about something that has happened a long way away but it does colour the way you think.

One participant felt that in a village environment local residents could do much to discredit YP. She cited one woman in particular in Location E who she felt was particularly antagonistic and influenced other elderly residents' perceptions with her unfair and biased attitudes towards village youths:

E-S: And she tells other people and that makes them angry with youngsters and I've got neighbours who say to me them blumin kids and those blumin kids that live there and I say well (p). She repeats things to my elder neighbours and then they start saying I don't like them kids hanging around I'm going to call the police, and they haven't done anything (p). I said to my neighbour when she pointed out youngsters. I said what have they done to you, and there was nothing. It was just what she'd heard in the village.

Scale of Anti-Social Behaviour

In all locations except for Location WW focus group data indicated participants' perception of the scale of anti-social behaviour locally. There was general agreement in Location KL that, based on police figures, the area was "very quiet compared with a lot of places". One participant, whilst agreeing, suggested however that this gave little comfort to those suffering football-related problems:

KL-HW: Oh yeh, that's true. We are lucky here in many ways. I mean everybody is not affected, but for the people that are affected it's a problem, and it's a big problem.

Another complainant referring to football went further, describing the problem as "really horrendous". Clearly the residents affected viewed the problem as serious, but interestingly interviews with members of the SNT produced data

which did not rate the problem at a high level. One SNT member described the problem as “causing a bit of angst”; also noticeable was her view that the perpetrators were younger than suggested by residents:

SNT-CB: Yeh, I think the area you were looking at in the [name of residential area] was young children under the age of 10 playing football and causing a bit of angst to residents down on the [name of location].

Similarly, the Community Police Support Officer (CPSO) for the specific problem area expressed the view that the problem was not at the level described by residents. He accepted that there was a perceived problem of:

KL-CPSO: Youngsters playing football across the junction, the grass on the verge had all but worn away and the common complaint was the ball going into gardens and the sound of the ball bouncing.

The Neighbourhood Watch Co-ordinator (NWC) said the behaviour described above was going on all day every day during the holidays and at weekends and the problem was intolerable. However, the CPSO claimed that after close examination of a diary of events he had requested residents to collate which contained details of times, dates, who was involved and the nature of the problem, he concluded that:

KL-CPSO: It was quite apparent the problem was nowhere near as bad as the Neighbourhood Watch Co-ordinator was perceiving.

The data collected from Location WC focus group participants included their views on classifying different behaviours in terms of severity and what can be tolerated:

WC-P2: Low level is sitting on a wall and talking and just pulling a leaf or two off the plants. I call that low level. [WC-P3: yeh, yeh]. And you just sit and think, oh, they're doing it again, that's it and that's fine, but throwing stones at your window and then just pulling faces after they've done it is not low level.

Focus group participants also reflected on behaviour today compared with when they were young, and data clearly suggested they felt standards had deteriorated:

WC-P1: I think there's more anti-social behaviour than there is clowning around [WC-P3: yeh] nowadays. Whereas years ago it used to be clowning around and a little bit of anti-social behaviour; I think it has taken over. It's the other way round.

WC-P2: The clowning around, but it seems to have swapped over; less clowning around and more anti-social behaviour.

One of the participants involved in this discussion felt strongly that behaviour had become more anti-social, and made the generalised comment that:

WC-P1: The anti-social behaviour that goes on I don't think any of it is low level any more, it's ALL, it's ALL high level anti-social behaviour no matter where you are.

Interestingly the value judgements made by focus group participants in Location E contrasted significantly. The damage caused to a barbecue, steps being “pinched” and a police sign moved following the village fete were rated as:

E-P: Silly things, it was silly things you know.

The scenario described by participants of youths re-siting a bench because ‘they were fed up sitting’ where it was originally sited was interpreted as acceptable and not anti-social. Although one participant considered this action “wrong”, it was not generally deemed as a problem because they had not vandalised it.

Another participant showed a sense of tolerance towards YP's behaviour which others might construe as ASB:

E-K: Last year I got showered with flour, trick or treat but it didn't bother me. Cos I opened the door and they said trick or treat and I said oh I'll have the treat please (everyone laughs) and I got flour all over me. That's the sort of thing that you've got to expect. It's not done in an aggressive sort of way and it's not done abusively.

No Problem

In the questionnaires, as explained earlier, a significant number of respondents considered that YP were not perceived as a problem. The focus groups allowed me to explore this theme further. For example, in Location E one participant throughout demonstrated support for the youngsters in the village, and in their defence stated:

E-K: Well I can. Which is err (p) Halloween, trick or treat (p) penny for the guy or carol singing. That's the only time really that I can say that I've encountered groups of em. You see em as a group waiting for the bus that picks em up to take them school or wherever but I don't think I've ever met a group of teenagers just angin about willy nilly in the village.

Whilst football games were perceived as an annoyance to some, a resident in Location WW thought otherwise, and showed tolerance towards local youths spending their time in this way:

E-J: There's always teenagers down our road they're playing football just outside on the road. No trouble at all. They're always the same group of kids always playing football. They often kick the ball on the garden and they always ask if they can get the football. I mean there's never any, I mean you can't say that there's any problem with them.

The secondary school's presence in Location WW means an increased number of YP are encountered in the village than would otherwise be the case. A focus group participant defended the majority:

WW-P: There are lots of youngsters pass our door coming to and from school who are no trouble whatsoever. They're not noisy or whatever and they go slowly to school and come back quickly from school (laughs).

Data from the focus group in Location KL demonstrated that some of the older residents interpreted the football-related behaviour of local children as a significant problem. However, not all Location KL focus group participants shared the view of some older residents that football was a significant problem. One younger, female participant who had young children considered it acceptable, normal behaviour by children of that age:

KL-BF: I see as just kids playing football. It sounds really awful but they're just being kids, they're doing the sorts of things I used to do when I was a kid. I think [the children] are really well behaved.

Reflecting on her view further she felt that:

KL-BF: Because I have kids I suppose the noise and stuff doesn't bother me because I'm used to it (laughs) most of the time with my own kids, so.

Interestingly, the local CPSO argued that the Location KL problem was less severe than claimed and an issue was the complainants' intolerance of the children's presence:

KL-CPSO: It was quite clear there was an intolerance to the children just being there.

Another older resident expressed tolerance of YP playing football near her house. Although not a current problem she had in the past not interpreted it as significant:

KL-NS: Kids have never really bothered me all that much you know as regards getting the ball back, that's fine.

However, if the ball went into her garden excessively rather than getting angry with them she would make the children wait for her to return it:

KL-NS: Err if it goes in the back garden from neighbours I'll maybe go and pick it up a couple of times and then I'll maybe say if they're a real nuisance which we have had in the past I'll say well you'll have to wait now until I go out the back and then I just throw it over the fence.

Problems Specific to Location E and WW

Locations E and W identified two other issues:

Alcohol Related

Qualitative data drawn from the questionnaires raised the problem of an unquantified number of incidents involving alcohol consumption in a specific area of Location E:

Q-E24: Incidents round back of village hall - drinking, girls egging lads on.

However, it was particularly surprising that in the fifty-seven questionnaires and the focus group data only one respondent cited alcohol as a problem. This was despite a Dispersal Order having been imposed in the area encompassing the village hall in the centre of the village. This was why this area of the village had been selected as the research location.

Litter

The additional issue raised in Location E by two questionnaire respondents was littering. The first was quite angry that:

Q-E9: In the summer they [youths riding on mini-bikes in a residential area] leave beer cans around.

Another respondent focused on one incident:

Q-E52: I witnessed a girl throwing rubbish on a garden. I asked her to pick it up and she did. I'm not affected by this but would prefer not to have to approach people in situations like these.

This suggests that this incident was sufficiently annoying for the respondent to address it directly with the litterer, but did not feel it should in fact be his responsibility.

The only other respondent to mention littering was in Location WW and for this resident it was a constant annoyance, although the respondent emphasised that the culprits were children from outside the village:

Q-WW4: School aged children getting on and off the bus frequently throw bottles and other litter in my garden on their way to and from school.

Problems Specific to Location KL

Generally, the other behaviour-related problems raised in the data generated in Location KL were connected with the problems already discussed with regard to children playing football.

Trespass

One theme emerging from the data was trespass. This related to children playing football and frequently running onto residents' gardens, to the annoyance of the latter:

KL-MJ: They run all over our gardens; run across the gardens, they run across the grass and jump over the flowerbed.

KL-JH: They are always in our gardens. They just run right across your garden as though it's their right.

Discourteous

Linked to the above, data emerged that showed that part of the problem was the children's lack of courtesy in approaching residents for permission to retrieve their ball:

KL-MJ: They never asking for the balls back. They don't come and knock.

KL-JH: They'll send other kids in. They won't come in; they'll send other kids in to trample all over.

Knock and Run

One type of behaviour perceived by one resident in particular as ASB could be described as 'knock and run'. The young boy blamed did not always try to conceal he was the culprit:

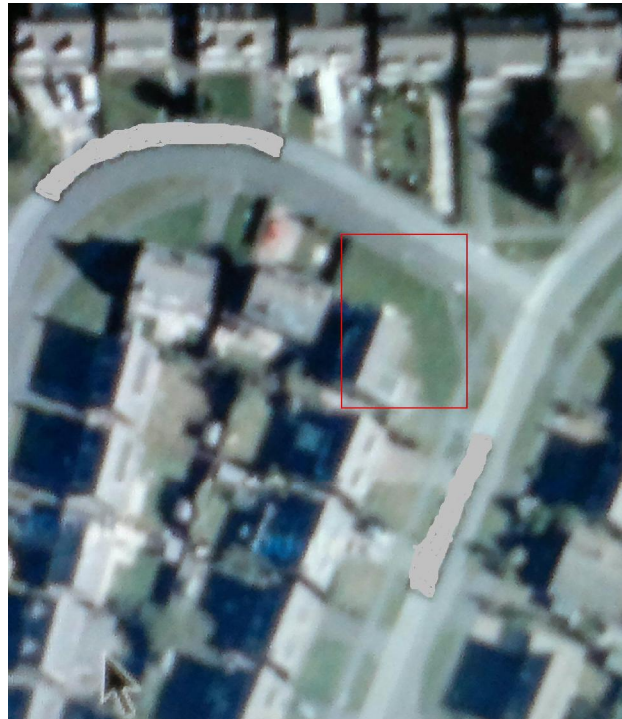
KL-MJ: I've had tapping on the windows, banging on my front door, past my lounge window, making a face in the window and off down the driveway.

Location

The bulk of the problems emerging from the data in Location KL were concentrated within a small area of the estate identified by the local SNT as the

research site. Figure 5.2 below represents an aerial view of the area which I refer to as 'The Close'.

Figure 5.2: Aerial image of 'The Close', Location KL



Source: Google Satellite, 2012

Focus group data confirmed that the problem was concentrated on the grassy area shown within the red rectangle in Figure 5.2, and the houses closest to this area:

KL-JH: I know we are in an unfortunate position where we are on the cross roads. We seem to get all the, you know, it's always seems to be in our little area and it's always in our gardens. But I do have to say I go round the rest of the estate, and you don't see it do you. It seems to be just on our corner. It's mostly us and MJ who get most of the problems because of where we live.

The residents affected live in the houses at a point where two roads meet, forming a T-junction. At the time of the focus group, children were prone to playing on a grassy area at the T-junction. Clustered round this area lived the

retired residents who were the complainants and the large family referred to earlier and at whose house other children tended to congregate to play. A resident living on this immediate area but who did not perceive the children playing football in this area as a problem, confirmed that this was a popular location:

KL-BF: They have played there quite lot. I think the trouble is they were playing outside somebody else's house.

Temporality

Other information contained in the data helped to expand on the nature of the problem; this related to the time-span of the problem's existence, details regarding the length of the bouts of behaviour and the time of day it occurred. One focus group participant talked about the problem first occurring three or four years ago:

KL-JH: We've never had a problem until these last three or four years. We've lived round here 44 years and it only happened just recently, well over the last three or four years.

Another complainant remarked that the problem sometimes subsided following police intervention, but would then escalate again:

KL-MJ: The community policeman has been down several times. He has been out and spoken to them and it might quieten down for a week. He's been, he's been there when they've been out playing. He's had a word with them. It might quieten down for a week or so and then it gradually starts up again.

The data identified detailed information on the pattern of behaviour in terms of how long bouts might last:

KL-MJ: If the children are out there they could be out there 8 hours at a time; they come out for 10 minutes; recently more; they come out for 10 minutes; they go away. You're waiting for that next 10 minutes and you could be waiting until 10 o'clock at night and they go in and out, in and out, especially during the school holidays.

An email sent to the Regional Neighbourhood Watch Co-ordinator (RNWC) by the above complainant provided additional data purported to 'recount a typical week', extracts of which are:

Sunday 28th March 2010 Sat down to watch tv, within 10 minutes, out playing football for 3 hours (14.50 to 18.05).

Monday 29th March 2010 Football out at 19.15

Tuesday 30th March Football out at 18.45

Thursday 1st April 2010 Football out at 17.00

Friday 2nd April 2010 Football out at 19.45 to 20.30

Sunday 4th April 2010 Football all day 11.30 to 18.00

Monday 5th April 2010 Football all day 13.00 to 18.30 (I thought that was it for today) then again 20.00 to at least 21.00

Outside Immediate Area

Alongside the football-related problems, Location KL data identified behaviour that other participants perceived to be anti-social. This related to older youths hanging around in the main shopping area. However I decided that an in-depth analysis of this was outside the scope of my thesis following a conversation with the SNT. The ASB Co-ordinator confirmed that the team was aware of the problems being experienced in this respect and that it was being addressed outside the remit of my project.

Problems Specific to Location WC

Harassment

Location WC data described an incident that had had a significant, negative impact on one participant during a bus journey home one late Saturday afternoon nine months previously. The incident centred on a group of youths

sitting at the back of the bus and throwing popcorn at an elderly woman nearer the front who was evidently distressed by the experience. The focus group participant had asked the youths to stop which resulted in her suffering harassment:

WC-P2: All because I was, because I was sticking up for an old lady. I was right at the very back so they surrounded me and when I tried to get off, their feet, I couldn't get over and had to climb over their feet , and I couldn't get over their feet so they just laughed at me, they thought it was funny.

Graffiti

The same participant as in the above quote spoke about youths repeatedly spraying graffiti on nearby buildings including the end wall of their house, and her husband repeatedly addressing the problem by covering it over with white spray-paint:

WC-P2: The low level you was talking about. I mean I don't know how many times my husband has been out with a white aerosol can to go over what they've put on [name of road] to cover up what it says. They've put [name of the road] is s-h-i-t [participant spelt it out] in **black**. And my husband goes out the next day and sprays a white aerosol can over it because it doesn't look very nice and then it's back again within a few more days.

Interestingly, although the participant disapproved of this behaviour, it emerged from the data she did not consider it high level ASB:

WC-P2: That's one level, low level stuff, but (p) it's still not nice to see it on your wall.

Substance Misuse

Within the data from Location WC there was a significant amount of discussion on what all the participants felt was a serious problem of substance misuse taking place in their local shopping precinct:

WC-P2: Of course, around us we've got the addict situation. We had a dealing last week (P1: yeh). Police went in [?]. We had a drug bust. So you've got all that around.

WC-P1: We've got a really bad drug problem round here. I've seen them waiting outside the co-op and the chemist.

WC-P3: Like the entrance to the chemist is just inside the co-op's door, and you get all your drug users going in there in the morning for their, what's it, methadone.

Associated with the problem behaviour described above was the problem of the same individuals consuming alcohol in the same area:

WC-P3: I was in there of a dinner time and a guy came in for some, is it white cider or something (p) and that was about quarter past twelve.

WC-P1: What about the bloke who was in there when I went in to pay the water bill.

WC-P3: Yeh, half past ten when we saw him.

WC-P1: White cider, white cider at half past ten in the morning (participant scoffed disapprovingly).

The validity of the views voiced above was strengthened by the findings resulting from an information gathering exercise led by the SNT as part of a SARA problem-solving exercise approximately six months before my research began. (SARA is a staged process which involves **S**canning and **A**nalysing the extent of the problem, **R**esponding to it and **A**ssessing the outcome). Local retailers complained that street drinking and related ASB was “disturbing for shoppers and other visitors to the area”. They also believed that this was “severely affecting their trade and was damaging the economic vibrancy of the area”. A local Resident Group had also raised similar concerns. The SNT had also canvassed the views of 28 visitors to the shopping precinct. The survey revealed that:

The biggest problem in the area was the congregation of adult street drinkers at the entrance to the Precinct. When asked to quantify the severity of the problem on a scale of 1-10 where 1 is not a problem and 10 is an extreme problem, they gave an average severity score of 8.2.

Summary

“Anti-social behaviour manifests itself in different ways across different communities”.
(Prior, 2009, p.19)

Prior (2009) in the above quote accurately reflects the nature of the findings discussed in this chapter, in particular the qualitative data regarding adults’ perceptions of what activities constitute ASB by ‘teenagers hanging around’. At the time of data collection in Location E and WW the percentage of respondents nationally perceiving THA as a very/fairly big problem stood at 32%; when data were collected in Locations KL and WC, nationally it was 27% (Home Office, 2006; 2010). Compared with the national statistics, in Location WW the percentage was significantly lower at 13% and slightly lower in Location E at 29%. In contrast the percentage of residents perceiving THA as a very/fairly big problem was slightly higher than the national average at 34% in Location KL but significantly higher in Location WC at 64%. Locally, different age groups’ perceptions of the scale of the problem were fairly constant with the exception of respondents aged 71+ where a higher percentage viewed THA as not a problem. Using gender as an independent variable 56% more females than males thought THA was a very/fairly big problem; conversely 42% of females and 28% of males perceived THA not to be a problem. Various hypotheses can be advanced to explain the findings regarding age groups and gender. Regarding age groups, reduced mobility in the 71+ group might mean reduced

contact with YP would influence their perceptions. An explanation for a higher percentage of females compared with males feeling that THA was a very/fairly big problem might be that the former are more predisposed to be worried about teenage behaviour. Whereas the females who perceived THA as not a problem might have teenage children and come into contact with YP generally on a frequent basis and are likely to feel more at ease with them. Unsurprisingly the majority of respondents who had frequently experienced a negative encounter with YP perceived THA as a very/fairly big problem; however, there were exceptions and 20% said it was not a problem. This perception might be due to the ASB experienced being interpreted as low level in terms of severity. Interestingly 50% who had had negative experiences occasionally perceived THA as a very/fairly big problem, possibly due to the severe nature of the behaviour. When asked at what level they thought other local residents perceived THA as a problem, respondents felt others' views would be more negative than the measurement of residents' perceptions showed to be the case.

There was a strong correlation between respondents' perceptions of the problem being very/fairly big and having had a negative experience, although there were exceptions and 11% of respondents in Locations E and WW and 25% in Location KL who said they had had a negative experience perceived THA as 'not a problem'. Also interesting were the views of 11% of respondents in Locations E and WW who had not had a negative experience, and of 17% in Location KL and 33% in Location WC who had had positive experiences but nevertheless felt THA as being a very/fairly big problem. Accordingly, whilst overall there is a broad correlation of experience to attitude, no firm conclusions

can be drawn due to people's differing responses to similar experiences. The quantitative data gave an overview of the perceived scale of the problem; the qualitative data helped to flesh out the detail in more depth.

Emerging from the qualitative data were various themes common to all locations, namely nuisance behaviour, property damage, dangerous practice, and offensive language. Data also gave an insight into who were thought to be the perpetrators, the scale of ASB, and some research participants' perception that THA was not a problem. The nature of the problem described under each of these themes varied. For example, in the theme 'nuisance' whilst the main activity mentioned was football-related problems, it also included youths on mopeds or walking home late at night, and 'egging'. Property damage was cited and ranged from damage to plants and flowers, to significant damage to a participant's car and serious vandalism at a leisure centre. In referring to dangerous practice participants either expressed their concern for the safety of the perpetrators or residents. In three of the four locations offensive language was a common theme. It was difficult to establish precisely the ages of the perpetrators. For example, in Location KL residents merely described the children causing the problems as being at secondary school, whereas the local ASB Officer described them as 10 year olds. In Location WC ages mentioned ranged from 12-18 years. Interestingly, whilst in Location E focus group participants blamed some of the ASB on a minority of teenagers, they also came to their defence and suggested that some culprits were from an older age group. What was significant for some participants was the number of youths involved; for example in Location WC it was suggested that between 7 and 12 could be involved in 'flipping the coin'. In Location KL the fact that there could

be 12-14 children playing outside participants' homes was an issue. Particularly in Location KL specific individuals were pinpointed as the main culprits

Data emerged which illustrated clearly the subjectivity of participants' perceptions regarding the scale of ASB. In Location E, property damage caused following a village event was described as "silly things, it was silly things". In contrast in Location KL, one participant described children playing football in a residential area, and as a consequence trespassing on their gardens, as "really horrendous". Interestingly, the local CPSO had taken the view that "the problem was nowhere near as bad as ... perceived". Specifically in Location KL not all focus group participants viewed the football-related activities as a problem and some were more sympathetic. Similarly, 'egging' was interpreted as kids being kids in Location E, and in Location WW participants of the focus group played down the problem of littering by school children, which one questionnaire respondent had viewed as a significant problem. Variations in qualitative responses mirrored some of the counter-intuitive results emerging from the quantitative data, especially in Locations E, WW and KL.

Specific to Location WC behaviour by YP which focus group participants viewed as ASB included the hostility of YP, playing flip the coin which resulted in motorists avoiding the area. Graffiti was also mentioned as was substance misuse involving either alcohol or drugs. Interestingly, the latter was spoken of as ASB rather than a criminal act. The former was disapproved of because of the place and time of day it occurred – in the entrance to a shop and at ten

o'clock in the morning. The views emerged from the qualitative data that rated the ASB as serious correlated with findings based on the quantitative data.

Burney (2006) and Millie (2009) suggest that the context within which behaviour occurs colours how we define it. As well as the reference to the context within which substance misuse took place, emerging from the data was other evidence that context did contribute to participants' interpretation of whether an act was or was not perceived as anti-social. The location where the activity took place was also a significant factor in Location KL; the playing of football by children was deemed anti-social by retired residents because it was located in a residential area and they resented the resultant damage to their gardens. Still on the subject of context, Millie (2006) suggests that "the defining feature that makes behaviour anti-social is its cumulative impact on individuals or groups; thus behaviour that is annoying or offensive may become anti-social if this is repeated or specifically targeted" (Millie, 2006, p.2).

The above quote may go some way to highlighting why some residents in Location KL felt that children playing football in The Close was perceived as "horrendous" and ASB. According to the data the main football-related problem described was a regular occurrence and had been ongoing for around four years.

The findings in this chapter have provided an insight into what adult residents in four different locations construct as youth-related ASB within their own localised settings. An appreciable proportion of the types of behaviour identified as ASB by residents falls within the working definition of low level ASB which I proposed

in Chapter 2, namely 'nuisance behaviour which the relevant authorities consider capable of being dealt with by the individuals or communities affected'. In some at least of the research locations the types of behaviour which my booklet was designed to address were present. The following chapter explores adults' responses to their lived experiences.

Chapter 6

Anti-Social Behaviour – Causality, Adult Responses, and Intergenerational Interaction

In Chapter 5 the focus was on understanding what types of youth-related behaviour adults perceived as anti-social, and their experiences of such behaviour. As mentioned in Chapter 2, although I had not explicitly sought views on what causes ASB, during the free-flowing discussion in the first two focus groups participants aired their views on this subject, and subsequently I included a similar discussion stream in the remaining two focus groups. Given the inductive approach of my research I felt it important not to discount prematurely the relevance of this data, not least because it facilitated further contextualisation within my research. It is for these reasons that I include this data as part of the findings, outlined in the first section of this chapter.

At the start of my study members of the Borough Council's Community Safety Team voiced the view that adults too readily complained to, and expected action by, Local Authority personnel in respect of ASB. To gain a broader picture, residents were asked to give an account of their responses to experiencing ASB. Relevant data are discussed in the second section of this chapter.

Literature (for example Waiton, 2001) and anecdotal evidence from LA personnel suggest that community-based intergenerational interaction has reduced in recent years. As explained in Chapter 1, the booklet promotes direct intergenerational interaction as a means of addressing tensions between adult

residents and THA. For this reason I considered it was important to gain an insight into adults' current attitudes towards their readiness to interact with YP encountered in their local environment. Data relevant to this issue is presented in the third section of this chapter.

Causes of Youth-related Anti-Social Behaviour

Data revealed participants' views on what causes ASB. Analysis followed a similar strategy as that described in the previous chapter in line with an inductive methodology. Emerging from the data was participants' attribution of both internal and external factors as causes. Internal factors will be discussed first.

Internal Factors

The notion of moral decline was a recurring theme in focus groups and it induced much nostalgic discussion about 'the good old days' and the extent to which young people's moral values were now lower. One example related to the damaged plants and planters outside the village shop in Location E. The research participants readily acknowledged that they might have committed similar acts when young, but then the discussion went on to distinguish between what they had done when young compared to today's youth. Key to this was their idea that taking vegetables and fruit from allotments, the property of another resident, was 'kids' being kids' rather than any form of vandalism.

E-K: We used to go to the allotments un pull up a few carrots and a few gooseberries or tomatoes but we never used to vandalise the property or vandalise anything. And my kids used to say to me dint you ever do anything when you was a kid dad? Yeh I did. I used to play knock down ginger but we didn't abuse (S: no, no) anybody. We didn't vandalise anything.

One respondent of the questionnaire felt strongly that lack of respect was a serious concern, and it was raised in the focus groups in connection with moral decline but to a lesser extent.

KL-AC: There is no respect for anything, people or property and that's what really bugs me.

However, data contained relatively little reference to lack of respect which was perhaps surprising given this was a prominent part of government discourse on the causes of ASB which received considerable media coverage, and was central to New Labour's Respect Agenda policy response (Burney, 2005; Millie, 2006; Squires, 2008). The latter was high profile during the fieldwork in Locations E and WW.

In Locations E and WW the notion that alcohol consumption was a causal factor of anti-social behaviour emerged from the data. In particular it was discussed in relation to the property damage caused at the village hall in Location E:

E-P: A lot of that was to do with the fact that the ones at the time you were probably talking about were 15, 16 years olds and alcohol was involved and once they've had a drink they were smashing the centre hall windows, um (p).

In Location WW one participant's experience of being disturbed late at night by YP's excessive noise and their lack of awareness of the impact this might have for others was thought to be fuelled by alcohol or drugs.

WW-P: At that sort of time, obviously either having had drink or drugs or whatever, I mean completely disregarding the local neighbourhood.

External Factors

The focus group participants in Location E did not condone YP targeting one member of the village by egging her house, as detailed earlier. However, it was evident from the data that participants felt that the culprits' action was not without provocation and that it played a significant part in the continuation of the problem:

E-S: There are for instances, in the village, people that do provoke the children and they wonder why and you know who I'm talking about because I said to you can't you get that person here. There's a wall next to her and I think the children some times sit there and she's straight out, straight out after them so (p).

This line of discussion was taken up by another participant who felt that adults more widely provoked negative reactions from YP by the way they communicated with them:

E-P: I think the biggest problems with adults and adults having problems with em is if you talk to them with an attitude (S: exactly) you're going to get an attitude back.

Related to the above quote was participants' discussion of adults' apathy towards interacting with YP in a positive way:

E-S: But I mean at the end of the day I personally do feel that a lot of it boils down to the people that have got the problems with them are the people who can't be bothered with em, don't want to talk to em in a nice way.

The quantitative data represented in Graph 5.12 demonstrated that a large percentage of questionnaire respondents overall felt that there were insufficient activities for YP. This notion was reinforced in the qualitative data collected. Data from Locations E and WW raised the issue of lack of local leisure facilities for youngster as a significant problem. This lack resulted in YP being bored

which in turn led to problem behaviour. Within the data two questionnaire respondents suggested that

Q-E56: They only annoy people because they are bored.

Q-E51: It's boredom that makes teenagers hang around in groups.

A similar discussion was had in the Location WW focus group which was summed up in a discussion by two participants who were parents of teenage children:

WW-J: A lot of the time there's nothing for them to do in the village any more is there?

WW-Mi: Nothing, literally nothing.

WW-J: Absolutely nothing.

WW-Mi: I've got a 15 year old went out last week. His mates come round. And he said I'm going out. Where are you going? I'm just going out for a walk round the village. Well where you going? I mean I know he's alright, I know his mates are alright. But where they going, there's nowhere to go.

WW-J: No there isn't.

WW-Mi: They walk from one end of the village to the other. They go on the playground, they sit around you know.

WW-J: I think they're just bored out of their tree. I really do.

Data in Location E suggested that what was required was, for example, a youth club, activities at the church hall. Interestingly when talking to the Chair of the Parish Council he was sympathetic towards the YP in this respect particularly as there was a village hall located centrally. His main frustration was that, since the refurbishment of the hall, it had been decided that youth-related events would not be provided at the venue "because of the damage they MIGHT

cause". He clearly disagreed with this sentiment, but felt powerless to oppose what had been a majority committee decision.

Within the data in Location E, another strand to the discussion of facilities was that there were sufficient facilities but that they were under-used; residents felt that YP should make better use of the recreation ground. In the case, for example, of football it was not the activity itself that was the main problem, but rather that it was played inappropriately in residential areas. However, focus group participants in Location E felt that the remote positioning of their recreation ground on the edge of the village prevented this:

E-S: The newsletter that come round, I don't know how long ago it was, that said about children playing ball and that they should go down the football field. Now who wants their children whatever age, well I mean I wouldn't let one of mine go down there on their own so what are they to do.

This was an issue that also arose within the data in Location KL. From the data gathered at the focus group it was evident that older residents were frustrated that YP were not using a recently built recreation ground. However, other participants had similar views to those expressed in Location E regarding the positioning of the facility:

KL-BF: It's completely down the end of the lane and you wouldn't expect children to go down there in the evening. It is down a long, down a dark, um kinda in the middle of nowhere to be honest. It's not the most suitable of places to go and I personally wouldn't want any kids down there, like at dusk or anything, because there's no lights or anything, and it really is like a single track lane on the way to nowhere. So for their safety more than anything else.

In response to the comments made in the quote above older residents pointed out that the village also had a park close by at which there was a playground

and youth shelter. They complained that this was under-used by the local children who favoured playing football in 'The Close'. Other members of the focus group gave the location as justification for these children not using it:

KL-BF: The trouble with the park is there are houses up there and I know people who live in the houses by the park don't like the teenagers being there because there has been benches moved recently to move them away from the houses. So the trouble you've got is that the kids have a social area up here, but the people who live in the houses up here don't like them being up here, so they are in a bit of a sticky situation because it's like the area they are meant to be in there.

Interestingly, emerging from the quote above is the issue of intolerance of residents living adjacent to the park to YP's presence. According to the data, more specifically, one resident who had recently moved next to the park had complained about YP's presence in the park. However, within the focus group discussion there was an absence of sympathy for this resident by some of the younger focus group participants; their view was that if you don't want children playing near your house, you don't buy one next to a park. From the data it was clear that the problem referred to here revolved around older youths populating the park, but an older participant of the focus group emphasised that in her view this was a positive activity:

KL-NS: I must say, the shelter they've got on the green they all sit perched up round on it, and I thought it was wonderful when I came by the other day and the place was absolutely full of teenagers. And I thought, that's brilliant, they're having a real good meeting there.

The views of some participants in Location KL that residents showed a lack of tolerance was shared by the local CPSO. In an email exchange with the Regional Neighbourhood Watch Co-ordinator he voiced the view that residents adversely responded too readily to the sight of YP playing in the area. However, he also felt improving tolerance was difficult to achieve:

CPSO: When you look at the other side of the coin in the past I have been and had a chat with some of the parents of the children often identified as supposedly causing problems. They report that as soon as the children leave the garden certain residents, some Neighbourhood Watch [members], are on the kids' case and feel the children aren't allowed to be children.

Whilst the discussion of intolerance in the above quotes focused on specific cases, in Location E a more general comment was made about adults' intolerance and their tendency to adopt double-standards:

E-K: Exactly, because older people today forget that they were teenagers and youngsters themselves.

In only two locations (E and WW) references emerged from the data that suggested lack of parental control was a direct cause of YP's anti-social behaviour. The general gist of the discussion was that some parents' standards of discipline, compared with research participants, were below what was required to prevent YP behaving badly, as represented in the quote below:

E-P: Parents are not as strict as I am with my children; I know where mine are and what they're doing; other parents don't care the same.

Connected to the notion of lack of *discipline*, data from Location WC demonstrated a strong view held by one participant, and condoned by other participants, that the prevalence of ASB today was due to the lack of institutional tolerance of punishment being meted out by both schools and parents:

WC-P1: I think anti-social behaviour started when corporal punishment was banned. When the cane at school was banned, before (P2: discipline). Yeh, before discipline was (p) now, you can't smack your kids

The participant quoted above also felt strongly that the *absence of police* response or their presence 'on the beat' was a causal factor of anti-social behaviour. This view was echoed in data from Location KL by two participants, which attracted agreement from other complainants:

KL-HW: We've all got problems here, yeh, and it's all been reported to the authorities, but nobody takes any bloody notice. (no, no - from several participants). No actions ever taken.

KL-MP: This didn't happen when we had the local policeman. I mean we've got community policemen but they're all afar aren't they. Nobody on the ground is there? Seeing it, doing something about it.

KL-HW: I've never seen one (No). I've never seen one.

KL-MP: There used to be one in the police house when we first came.

KL-HW: No, I mean the community police that are supposed to be walking about. I've never seen one. I've never even seen one in the car. Oh, I did, sorry. A couple of times, going past in the car.

KL-KW: They're never walking

KL-HW: Oh they're never walking.

Moral decline was highlighted as a causal factor earlier in relation to YP specifically. However, there was a significant amount of discussion in Location WW about moral decline in society generally:

WW-Ma: There was more discipline then. ... But there wasn't any sort of violence. But then of course when I was brought up, when you were too, there wasn't the drugs problem.

Another strand of discussion that emerged from the data in two locations related to the view that the scale of ASB was over-exaggerated. One comment from a participant in Location E suggested that in general ASB was "all blow up and you shouldn't believe all that you hear". In Location KL, a focus group participant who neighboured the complainants felt strongly that some of the

accusations made “had been over-exaggerated”. This last opinion was reinforced by the CPSO, and data from my interview with RNWC. The latter felt that a complainant describing the problem behaviour as causing the affected residents to be “at the end of our tether here” was overstated.

Additional Factors Specific to Location KL

In Chapter 5 reference was made to the physical environment on the estate in Location KL. Figure 5.2 features a map showing a specific area where the football-related problems were being experienced. Whilst the environment cannot be directly blamed for the problems, there are factors present in the data which might be considered to exacerbate the situation. At the T-junction shown in the map there are grassy areas on which the children liked to play because:

KL-BF: Yeh. I think it's just because it's the most space. Yeh I think they play there because that's the space where it's not kinda near anybody's houses. The road is kind of wide enough that they're not really going near the front gardens and stuff.

The quote above suggested that the area is a prime site for children to play; there is adequate space and it is not too close to anyone's house. However, a significant problem emerging from the data was the fact that front gardens were of an open plan design. This meant there were no fences to act as barriers to children running onto neighbours' gardens to retrieve footballs, or prevent footballs hitting and damaging plants. Coupled with this was the fact that the affected residents were keen gardeners, and data showed that they were very unhappy about children trampling over their gardens. According to one complainant requests had been made to the council for permission to erect fences but this was denied because of planning regulations specific to the estate.

Interestingly, the local CPSO considered that a contributory factor to the problems was the demographic mix in The Close. More specifically he suggested that the intergenerational mix of retired people and young families was a combination which could generate tensions:

CPSO: The area in question is made up of retired people living in an area which is mostly built up of family homes both MOD and civilian with many families with young children, in my experience this formula doesn't mix well.

Adult Residents' Responses to Perceived ASB

Looking first at adults' responses to what they perceived to be ASB, from analysing the qualitative data in the questionnaires and from the focus groups in all locations, themes emerged which showed that participants' responses to experiencing ASB could be categorised as either 'emotional' or 'practical'. Across all locations, of those who claimed to have experienced negative behaviour by YP, forty-six references were made which indicated an emotional response; twelve responses were of a practical nature. Some of the data relating to the latter are discussed in this Chapter; some relate closely to participants' views on governance of THA and therefore will be discussed in Chapter 7.

Emotional Response

The process of completing the questionnaires did not lend itself to gathering detailed information, and therefore the data gathered were brief in nature. Table 6.1 below gives the results of a content analysis of the relevant data (the table below represents actual words used by respondents to describe their emotional responses):

Table 6.1: Respondents' emotional responses to experiencing ASB

<i>Emotional Response</i>	<i>Frequency</i>
Frightened	9
Annoyed	9
Angry	6
Intimidated	4
Nervous	3
Upset	3
Apprehensive	2
Threatened	2
Uncertain	1
Disappointed	1
Quite terrified	1
Didn't like it	1
Anxious	1
Distressing	1
Invading	1
Desperate	1

Combined there were 15 references to feeling a sense of annoyance or anger at what respondents had experienced; for others there was clearly a sense of vulnerability as they described themselves as being anxious, apprehensive, frightened, intimidated, nervous or quite terrified. Most of the data on emotional responses consisted of one word answers, with the exception of one or two where respondents added a little more information to qualify their feelings. For example, one respondent in Location E had been 'upset dreadfully' because:

Q-E30: They [children] damaged a tree at the front, on the pavement at front of my house. It upset me dreadfully.

Another respondent in the same location, although had not given details on specific incidents, explained that she felt 'annoyed'. Similar sentiments to those voiced in the quote below were echoed by participants in Locations KL and WC. One questionnaire respondent stated that she was annoyed:

Q-E55: At the lack of respect shown by the teenagers and their parents towards other people and others' property.

Whilst a sense of desperation emerging from the data was only raised by one participant in Location KL, she emphasised that she was not isolated in feeling this emotion and felt that she could speak for other neighbours also:

KL-JH: You know it wasn't just us it were about six families that it involved and we were getting desperate to be honest.

In the case of another member of the focus group in Location KL, whilst she did not feel that the children playing football was the problem described by other participants, data suggested that she had a sense of the distress this caused others.

KL-BF: This is obviously affecting other people because it is, you know, causing them distress.

The focus group participant from Location WC who described her experience as "quite terrifying, quite terrifying" was referring to the incident involving a group of youths on her bus journey, discussed earlier. She expanded on this, saying:

WC-P2: I was frightened in case I got off the bus and they followed me.

In connection with the problem of substance misuse in Location WC, data demonstrated that focus group participants felt threatened by drug users' presence in public places even without any direct contact. The quote below represents the common consensus of fellow participants of this view:

WC-P3: It's quite threatening actually at the co-op because. Yeh, and some of the characters that go in there you just (p) you feel really threatened to even go into the co-op to do your shopping.

Practical Response

As well as emotional responses to perceived problem behaviour data emerged that related to practical responses. Emanating from the data was the utilisation of avoidance tactics; four questionnaire respondents in Location WC said that they now tried to avoid interaction with YP who they had witnessed acting anti-socially.

With regard to 'flipping the coin' discussed earlier, two participants of the focus group said that their experience of this activity had led them to avoid driving in that area:

WC-P2: We've taken to going round the other way. (WC-P1: yeh) We never go that way now.

WC-P1: Yeh, us too.

The quote below relates to how one elderly woman who felt intimidated by YP knocking on the door at Halloween managed the situation by not acknowledging them, but also by manipulating the situation to make it appear she was not at home. As her daughter explained:

E-P: So my mum's on her own, she lives in well she lives on her own and come Halloween night she'll go sit at the back of the house, she'll turn the lights out, she doesn't want to answer the door just in case. So she ses, she doesn't want them to know the fact that she's there and the lights on and she's ignoring them because they think oh ignorant, so she puts herself at the back of the house, has the lights off at the front and don't well they don't even knock on her door any more.

In Location E one questionnaire respondent who had experienced the problems that had occurred near the village hall explained the chosen strategy was to:

Q-E47: Avoid certain areas of [own] garden.

The focus group participant in Location WC who raised the issue of YP sitting on the wall outside her house, laughing and swearing stated that whilst this was something she tolerated, to avoid being subjected to it she would:

WC-P2: Usually just get up and close window so I don't hear it, and just leave them.

The same participant as above who was the victim of the unpleasant experience on the bus referred to earlier, had chosen to take extreme tactics to avoid a recurrence:

WC-P2: Well, I can honestly say, I've travelled on the local buses for forty years, and I've never been on one since what happened on the bus coming home. And I've not been on the bus since, I just don't.

Specifically in Location KL intergenerational and intergroup tensions were emerging from the data as significant factors. The intergroup contact theory claims that tensions can be alleviated through positive intergroup contact and the Let's Talk Booklet draws on this theory and encourages intergenerational contact. However, an assumption central to this study is that adults are reluctant to have intergenerational interaction with YP they perceive as anti-social. Data discussed earlier where adults' practical response to encountering ASB was avoidance tactics gives some validity to this assumption. In an attempt to strengthen the validity, and as a building block on which to examine the potential for using the booklet, it was important to further investigate adults' attitudes towards interacting with YP encountered in public areas. To this end a question was asked via the questionnaire and focus groups 'If you meet a group of teenagers hanging around on the street what do you do and how do you feel?' It is to the responses to this question that I now turn.

Intergenerational Interaction – Adult Residents’ Perspective

In Chapter 3 I discussed the Deficit of Inter-group Contact Theory which suggests that lack of interaction between age groups can perpetuate existing negative perceptions. As one of the aims of the booklet is to encourage contact, the extent to which contact occurs is an important phenomenon requiring analysis.

At the first stage of data coding a content analysis strategy was employed, but this was then backed up with analysis of qualitative data employing a similar approach described earlier and loosely based on the inductive approach. Emerging from the data were themes that related to direct contact either in the form of verbal or non-verbal interaction, context, and emotional responses which are discussed below.

In total 29% of respondents from Locations E and WW said that they would generally speak to YP, either just to say hello or some specifically said they would ‘have a chat’. The majority intimated that they would initiate friendly verbal interaction whilst 15 said they waited for YP to speak first and then would reciprocate. Interestingly the above responses were not only limited to respondents who had not had a negative experience. Eight who had had negative experiences said when encountering YP they would speak or smile. A further five respondents said they tended not to have a verbal exchange, but would smile or acknowledge YP with a nod of the head. However, eight respondents referred to experiencing negative emotions such as *intimidation*, *apprehension*, or they felt *cautious*, *nervous*, and *a little wary*. Approximately 50% of adults said that they would either just walk by, ignore the YP’s presence,

or they would intentionally cross the road so that they did not have to pass them in close proximity. One participant in the focus group in Location E felt that, whilst he was very happy to interact with YP he felt a lot did not want to because of their antipathy towards YP:

E-K: I do [interact], but then (p) I'm probably different to most other people because most other people like who are getting on or middle aged and that don't want to [interact]. They want to confront them all the time because they think they're a problem.

In Location KL only 7 of the 29 questionnaire respondents said that they would have positive verbal interaction with YP; nothing was mentioned regarding non-verbal interaction. In the case of Location WC the only response relating to verbal interaction was made by one respondent who said she would reciprocate if spoken to by a young person. Two respondents said that they would smile or make eye contact.

Only one participant in each of Locations KL and WC suggested that the context within which their encounter took place was significant; one mentioned the time of day, the other said what the YP were doing was significant.

However, in Locations E and WW the context within which encounters took place was an important influence on people's willingness or otherwise to interact. For example, 25 of the respondents said that they knew most of the children in the village so felt comfortable speaking to them. However, data showed that there were certain situations or factors that may dissuade adults from interacting. For example, a participant in Location E felt that the size of the group and what they were doing was important. The quote below demonstrates

that YP's body language and how their behaviour was interpreted played a factor:

E-P: Body language comes into it and I have to say if I thought it was a particularly unruly group, if you thought there was something going in there then you'd think I'm not even going there, but if it was just what you call normal kids just having a laugh then well (K: yeh, it's no problem is it).

Data from Location WW illustrated similar sentiments in Location WW.

WW-Ma: I think it also depends on how many there are as well. [General agreement by all members]. You know if there's just a couple then you don't think much about it but then if there are half a dozen of them then it would be a different thing altogether. I suppose it depends on what they're doing. If they're talking to each other that's less threatened really isn't it.

Another context-specific consideration voiced was that of location. Fourteen people said that whilst they felt comfortable talking to YP in the village this would not be the case in the nearby town. This view was further qualified in expressions such as *feeling intimidated, a bit wary, not happy, outside the village not sure, uneasy*. Although not providing the specific context within which they would feel negative emotional responses, five respondents in Location WC referred to feeling *afraid, intimidated, threatened* or *worried* when encountering YP in public places.

For one male participant the *gender* of the YP was an issue; whilst he would speak to boys he was not happy to speak to girls:

WW-P: I feel very very wary if they're girls. Speaking to them because I think you know for a different reason. And yet very often as they go by the girls will smile and say Hi you know, they don't know me from Adam.

Finally, one other variable relating to context which was raised in all but Location KL was the time of day the encounter might take place; during daytime hours participants felt fine whereas in the evenings they either felt uneasy or would avoid going out other than in the car.

Summary

Ineffective policing, and inadequate disciplining and control by parents and institutions such as schools were cited as causal factors of the continuation of ASB. The moral decline of teenagers specifically and society in general were also raised as contributing to ASB, and to a lesser extent so too were alcohol consumption and lack of respect. It was suggested that lack of leisure facilities which resulted in boredom led to young people's ASB. In two locations the inappropriate siting of outdoor facilities in isolated areas which resulted in children playing in more populated residential areas was raised as contributing to the perceived levels of ASB. This factor was particularly true in Location KL and as already stated intergenerational tensions were high between children and retired residents because the older residents felt the recreation ground was a more appropriate place for the children to be playing rather than close to houses and gardens.

Interestingly emerging from the data were themes which suggested that the problem was not only the activities of YP but also the reaction of adults. For example, some of the discussion at three of the focus groups centred on adults' over-exaggeration of the severity of ASB, and intolerance of YP in their area. In Location E, participants at the focus group suggested that the ASB suffered by

one resident in particular was caused partly by her intolerance and antagonism towards the local teenagers which acted as provocation.

Being a victim of perceived ASB induced negative emotional responses such as fear, annoyance, anger, intimidation. Regardless of the level of ASB, the experience can have a significant negative impact on people, as the data demonstrate. Even behaviour which might be categorised as low level ASB, such as football, noise or minor damage induced a similar emotional response as more serious vandalism. The practical responses participants described included avoiding areas or situations which could potentially result in a repeat negative experience, speaking directly to the culprits or parent, or contacting the Safer Neighbourhood Team. However, fear of reprisal and the perceived ineffectiveness of the police were reasons given for not contacting the SNT.

As stated earlier, a central theme of the Let's Talk booklet is promoting positive intergenerational interaction between adults and YP. Literature suggests that interaction has diminished over the years for reasons described in Chapter 2. To investigate to what extent this is true in the research sites and to provide valuable data which could impact on implementation strategies for the booklet, participants were asked what did they do and how did they feel when encountering THA. In all four locations, whilst some adults were happy to acknowledge YP, a significant number said that they would ignore YP, walk by or cross the road to avoid them. Participants in Location WC showed the most reluctance to interacting with YP. This is perhaps not surprising given the nature of behaviour described.

As with participants' perceptions of the level of ASB in their areas, context was also an important predictor of whether or not interaction with YP occurred. Particularly in Locations E and WW participants described feeling more comfortable interacting with YP in the village rather than in the nearby town, and during the day rather than at night. The body language used by YP and the numbers involved were also important factors. Interestingly, one male participant said gender was an issue and that he would avoid speaking to girls in case any interaction was construed negatively.

Data analysis provided valuable insights into the extent of youth-related ASB perceived and/or experienced in the four locations, adults' responses, their views on the causality of ASB and their willingness to interact. The approach in the booklet encourages residents to take an active role in the governance of ASB, their views on which I address in the following chapter.

Chapter 7

Governance

As discussed in Chapter 1, Local Authority personnel felt that in some instances residents were relying unduly on official intervention to tackle nuisance behaviour (frequently referred to as ASB) by young people. It was hoped that through the Let's Talk project residents could be encouraged to adopt a different perspective, and thereby improve their perceptions of YP, reduce their anxiety which in turn encourages positive engagement with the YP, and be less reliant on LA personnel intervention. I was conscious that people's willingness to effect resolution by adopting a strategy not previously considered or indeed possibly alien to their extant personal views and practice could affect the implementation of the booklet generally and the implementation strategy specifically. This could be true of the different parties involved – residents and LA personnel. Therefore I thought it important to gain some understanding of individuals' values and beliefs regarding the *governance* of ASB, and how they conceptualise it. The views of residents and Local Authority personnel were sought; LA data will be primarily discussed later in this chapter. However, where deemed appropriate, Safer Neighbourhood Team data are discussed in conjunction with residents' data.

To gain residents' views participants at the focus groups in the four locations were asked: *what do you think can be done to tackle perceived anti-social behaviour of young people?* At this point participants had not had sight of or been told about the booklet, and therefore the views given had not been influenced by its content.

To establish whether or not there was any synergy between residents' and LA personnel's views on governance I gathered data at a meeting attended by six representatives of the SNT representing Locations KL and WC, from subsequent one to one telephone conversations and email exchanges, as well as from email correspondence between LA personnel. This was supplemented by data gathered at the booklet development workshops. Although the primary purpose of the workshops was the booklet's development, an added dimension to the events was discussion of possible implementation strategies.

Unfortunately, because the events had not been set up for and were not conducive to gathering audio recordings my data are not as comprehensive as I would have liked. In this instance therefore I rely mainly on short pieces of verbatim quotes I was able to capture in shorthand and my reflective journal post events.

Data coding involved a staged strategy, similar to that used for the qualitative data in Chapters 5 and 6; starting with reading and re-reading the transcripts, followed by open coding based on the inductive approach (Bazeley, 2007). As explained in Chapter 4, in the early stages *responsibilisation*, and *authoritarian* and *welfaristic* approaches to governance emerged as themes. For example, one participant suggested parents should be held responsible for their children's anti-social behaviour and fines or eviction imposed on them. Alternatively, data suggested that some participants favoured a *welfaristic* approach of providing leisure facilities. However, as described in Chapter 4 I concluded that Garland's work did not give sufficient emphasis to agency.

Emanating from my data were the concepts of *human agency* (in different guises), and *self- and collective-efficacy*. The concept of human agency emerged in relation to people's perceptions of who should be the main activist of agency and/or at what level. By undertaking a further literature search I identified the Social Cognitive Theory (SCT), based on Bandura's work (see for example, Bandura, 1989), which helped me to gain a deeper understanding of human agency and self-efficacy which resonated with the themes emerging from the data. Therefore the SCT provided a valuable framework against which to develop coding, which at this point became more theoretical.

Resonating with my data were the three different models of human agency referred to in the SCT – personal, proxy and collective. Personal agency refers to individuals being prepared to act themselves directly to influence "their life circumstances" (Bandura, 2006, p.164). In the second model, collective agency, people believe that the most effective means of tackling an issue is through the 'collective power' of groups. As Bandura (2006) explains "group attainments are the product not only of the shared intentions, knowledge, and skills of its members, but also of the interactive, co-ordinated, and synergistic dynamics of their transactions" (p.14).

As explained in Chapter 4, important in SCT is the concept of self-efficacy, which Wood and Bandura (1989 cited in Harrison, Rainer, Hochwarter and Thompson, 1997) defined as "beliefs in one's capabilities to mobilise the motivation, cognitive resources, and courses of action needed to meet situational demands" (p.80). One's level of self-efficacy greatly influences

agency, within both the personal and collective models. In the literature on SCT it is suggested that the success of collective agency is as reliant on high levels of self-efficacy as is personal agency. Bandura (1998) suggests that “a strong sense of efficacy is vital for successful functioning regardless of whether it is achieved individually or by group members working together” (p.66). Individuals who perceive themselves to have low levels of self-efficacy are more prone to take a pessimistic view of their ability to execute agency (Bandura, 2001). For instance, data discussed later in the chapter suggest participants’ perceive their level of self-efficacy to be negatively affected by overly bureaucratic procedures. Where individuals feel that they do not have the means, expertise or inclination to act personally, they may favour the third model, proxy agency - the reliance on others deemed better equipped, having the necessary experience or expertise. A more detailed discussion of the data and related themes will be covered later in this chapter. First I undertake further discussion of the coding process.

It was through a process of rereading the data and cluster coding that theoretical coding against the SCT developed. Sometimes this resulted in codes being replaced with new ones, some being repositioned under higher order codes, some being merged. Figures 7.1 and 7.2 featured later in the chapter illustrate how the data were ultimately coded utilising the three models of human agency. Figure 7.1 represents data collected from the residents in Locations E and WW (collectively), Location KL, and Location WC. Figure 7.2 relates to the views of the SNT representing Locations KL and WC, as well as the Workshop participants associated with Locations E and WW. I have chosen to make a distinction between the two sets of data for various reasons.

Firstly, the views of 25 residents during focus groups plus one other resident (via telephone) were canvassed on how, in general terms, YP's perceived anti-social behaviour could and should be controlled. Also, as mentioned previously, they had not had sight of the booklet. The members of the SNT and participants of the Workshops were asked specifically for their views on the implementation of the booklet. I will discuss the codes represented in Figure 7.1, followed by those in Figure 7.2, and will include a cross-case analysis within and between the data in the final section of this chapter.

Before doing so it is important to outline the basis on which I made distinctions between personal, collective and proxy agency as at times the boundaries between the three seemed blurred. Based on close analysis of the data I fixed on the following distinctions in categorising agency. Personal agency refers to anyone who would be prepared to act as an individual on an autonomous basis. Examples of this are the participant quoted on page 181 of Chapter 5 who said she was happy to ask children not to throw litter, or the one quoted on page 222 below, who as an individual approached YP subsequent to damage caused following a village event. Collective agency relates to action taken within a formalised collective, for example a group project, or within an informal collective but where the activity involves a group of people (two or more individuals) explicitly working together for a common cause. For example, the history group exhibition referred to later where people came together with the specific aim of working collaboratively to organise and deliver a community event is a good example of collective agency. Within my coding, proxy agency was linked to action carried out by professional groups, organisations or

individuals who held formal, paid positions of responsibility such as the police, LAs and schools.

Governance – Adult Residents’ Views

Figure 7.1: Governance – Residents’ Views

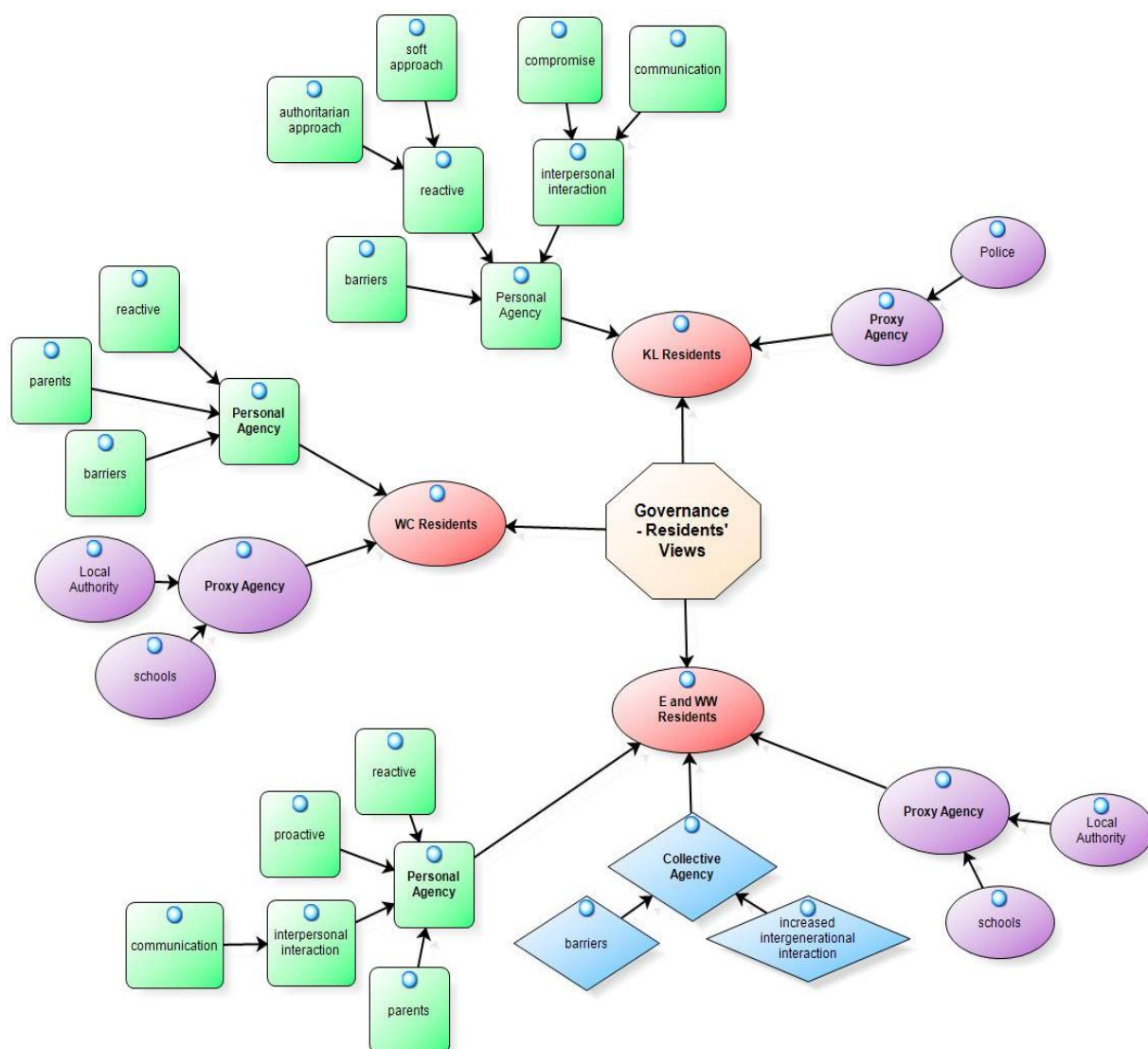


Figure 7.1 gives an overview of the extent of granularity in my coding convention. It shows that, reflecting the richness of data captured, the degree of granularity varies somewhat between locations. For example, for Location KL ‘reactive’ is further sub-divided into ‘soft approach’ and ‘authoritarian

approach' whereas in other locations it is not. The architecture of the discussion that follows reflects the coding illustrated in Figure 7.1.

Personal Agency

In all four focus groups some discussion on governance came under the heading of personal agency. However, what further emerged from the data was the distinction made by participants between reactive and proactive approaches.

Reactive

Nine of the 26 participants said that they had in the past taken direct action to curb perceived problem behaviour by YP locally. One participant talked about it being his 'duty' as the local Neighbourhood Watch Co-ordinator to respond to problems by going to 'visit mum and dad' to make them aware of their child's behaviour.

Within the *reactive* theme two sub-themes emerged which reflected participants' styles of reaction: *authoritarian approach* and *soft approach*. It was interesting to find that of the nine who talked about personal agency in a reactive sense, seven described using a *soft approach*. For example, one woman in Location KL said that when she went out to speak to YP she tried 'to be sympathetic'.

KL-MJ: I will go out, I don't go out and shout at them, I will go and speak to them. I ask them to very nicely and that's what I say to them it's just a GENTLE reminder that you know you're not supposed to be coming over here. I try to do it very nicely.

Data within the correspondence between the Regional Neighbourhood Watch Co-ordinator and the CPSO confirmed that similar information had been given to the former by the above research participant:

RNWC: She informs me that she has asked the children involved to move away and stop going onto her garden and damaging her plants etc.

However, interestingly, other data obtained from this participant contradicts the essence of the two quotes above:

KL-MJ: I don't want to antagonise them by going out and saying well go and play outside your own house. So I tend to try and just let it go.

Data showed that in the past the above complainant had been advised by the CPSO, in an attempt to 'block out' the irritation of children playing football, to 'turn up your television and pull your curtains'. However, she did not consider this course of action effective as it "will not stop them playing football".

One male participant in Location WC gave an example of an occasion when a boy was kicking a football at his front door and he 'went out and said to him in a nice way "do you mind stop kicking the football". A female participant was of the view that using a soft approach had a better impact on YP's understanding of why their actions were inappropriate. She gave an example of an occasion when damage had been caused to equipment following an outdoor village event and as one of the organisers she had spoken with teenagers she suspected of being the culprits:

E-P: I went over to them and I just said I'm REALLY REALLY disappointed. I said you know, you've actually spoilt things for yourself and of course they all then sort of looked sorry. If I'd had gone (actions to represent speaking in an aggressive way) I'd have got a load back.

It is clear from the above quote that the participant felt it counter-productive to speak to the YP harshly, feeling that this would exacerbate the situation and make it less likely that the YP would respond positively.

In contrast to using a soft approach, two participants admitted that when they reacted to YP's behaviour they did so in an authoritarian way. One retired man in Location KL said that he goes out and shouts at them. A female participant described how her husband reacted in an aggressive way:

KL-GS: You know if a football hits the car or hits the plants, you know what I mean, he goes rushing out (laughs) all guns blazing. Scares them off.

I noted during the conversation that she appeared embarrassed that this was his action, adding with a nervous laugh that "he reacts like you don't want them to react".

The above data demonstrates that some individuals were prepared to speak directly to the YP they perceived to be acting anti-socially. However, in some instances personal agency was limited to notifying SNT members or schools.

Data emerged which showed that some research participants had reported problem behaviour to the school and/or police, but they had different views as to this strategy's effectiveness:

Q-WW12: Tackled school; talked to police; police move them on.

Q-WW18: I notified police but no action taken.

A similar strategy was evident in the data collected from Location KL in respect of the football-related problems, although in various forms. One approach was to contact the local NWC who up until just before the focus group had been one of the residents affected by the problem. Residents saw him as a conduit between them and the police:

KL-JC: MJ and JH particularly have been across and asked me to get in touch with the police and so on.

In addition to this one of the complainants, who was also the Secretary of the local Neighbourhood Watch had emailed the RNWC. On this occasion the Regional Co-ordinator forwarded the complaint to the local CPSO who was clearly familiar with the problem:

CPSO: We have a call from the Neighbourhood Watch group in that area the same time every year just before Easter holidays claiming that there is a major problem with kids causing a nuisance.

Data from the RNWC shows that the response complainants were hoping for was increased police presence in the area:

RNWC: You know what she's like, but err she emailed me and said look (name) you know, can you, you know use your influence to make sure we get more police there.

However, as discussed earlier in this chapter this course of action was deemed by various members of the SNT to be unnecessary. An inference that could be made from the opening comment of the above quote is that the RNWC shared the same view.

Proactive

Interestingly, as well as talking about a reactive response, a participant in Location WW was also of the opinion that a proactive response was important. He suggested that adults should lead by example; by interacting directly with YP in a friendly way adults could have a positive impact on the former. In fact, the emphasis he placed on the words 'should try' suggests that he considered it his duty to try to follow through with the recommendation. He went so far as to suggest that this was an appropriate response even when not reciprocated.

WW-P: I speak to them because I think if you don't speak to them they have no chance of you know they don't understand the common courtesy of how life is carried out. So I think it's important that we as adults SHOULD TRY to converse with them even if they tell you to go away and multiply [general laughter].

Interpersonal Interaction

Other participants in Location WW emphasised the importance of positive *interpersonal interaction* with YP and making a conscious effort to *communicate* in a friendly way could help intergenerational relations. This issue was also collectively raised in Location E, emphasising that the notion of setting a good example by being civil towards YP would engender positive responses. To reinforce this message a participant had explained how she had encouraged her mother to take a proactive, soft approach when seeing YP. Within the data she spoke of her mother going "through a stage where she thought because she was older she could just like say what she wanted and that would be fine". The participant clearly thought this was unacceptable and took her mother to task, stating:

E-P: You know if you're in your front garden and they all walk past if you look up and smile they'll smile back. If you look up and say hello, they'll say hello, but if you look up and frown and throw dirty looks and look at them to see what they're going to do next, then they're going to do it back.

It was clear from the data that these sentiments were shared by all members of the focus group in Location E, and one of the female participants summed up their collective agreement by saying:

E-S: You've gotta be, gotta be civil with the kids, you gotta treat them as you would want your children to be treated and yourself. And you know that's what makes all the difference.

The theme of interpersonal interaction and communication also emerged from the discussions in Location KL; however, it had a different focus. Rather than being concerned about the manner in which adults spoke to YP the emphasis firstly was on making sure they made children aware of what was considered acceptable, the reason why some behaviour was irritating, and what were the potential consequences of over-stepping stated behavioural boundaries. One participant gave an example of how he had adopted this approach with YP:

KL-BC: [Children] used to play on [near the side of our house] all the time and we used to say one stipulation, we used to say don't kick the ball off the wall because there's nothing worse than hearing thump, thump, and we never had any problems with that at all sort of thing because they knew that there was a bit of garden there they could play on it, and if they left a mess then they would be asked to leave sort of thing; if they disrespected it then that was it.

Also linked to the above was a discussion around the notion of *compromise*.

The suggestion was that individuals should "kind a look at both sides"; from the adults' and children's points of view. As the participant put it "So it's kind a finding a happy medium between both of them".

A second strand to the discussion of *interpersonal communication* was the need for complainants and parents of the children perceived to be causing the problem coming together to talk through the problem. As one participant, who had not had cause to complain about children's behaviour, put it, "it needs to be discussed doesn't it".

Bandura (1998; 2000; 2001; 2002; 2006) posits that people's preparedness to exercise personal agency is affected by their level of perceived self-efficacy. I would suggest that this is borne out in my data. The participants quoted above appeared comfortable with the notion of interacting with the YP in an attempt to address perceived incivilities. They demonstrated a sense of self-efficacy as they were prepared to take action, whether through an authoritarian or softer approach. Bandura (1998, p.58) further suggests that in any given situation one might mentally visualise the alternative ways parties might react or how the scenarios might develop. Those who can focus on a positive scenario are more likely to perceive themselves as having high levels of self-efficacy which in turn promotes personal agency. This resonates with my data discussed above in the scenario where the participant encouraged her mother to view potential interaction in a positive light which in turn could induce a proactive, positive approach as a springboard to future intergenerational encounters.

Conversely Bandura (2002) argues that perceived low self-efficacy is likely to produce imagery of negative scenarios which "undermine performance" (p.58) which in turn deters individuals from exercising personal agency. It is evident from the data that some participants felt they lacked the level of self-efficacy needed to encourage them to engage in interpersonal encounters. Fernández-

Ballesteros, et al. (2002) identify cultural, social and personal factors as influencing one's self-efficacy and the extent to which one feels competent and inclined to interact. Bandura (2002) argues that self-efficacy can be adversely affected by an emotional reaction to a situation in which perceived threat or uncertainty may induce anxiety. Motivation, also recognised as a driver of personal agency, is similarly influenced by self-efficacy. Bandura (1998, p.58) argues that 'the effects of goals, outcome expectations and causal attributions on motivation are partly governed by beliefs of personal efficacy'. Some of these and other issues emanated from my data, and were factors which acted as barriers to interpersonal interaction. It is to the theme of *barriers* that I now turn.

Barriers

As Figure 7.1 shows Location KL and WC were the two locations where data emerged which identified *barriers* that dissuaded participants from showing a willingness to realise personal agency as a means of governing perceived anti-social behaviour. In the case of the male participant mentioned earlier, who had tried to respond in a friendly way to a boy kicking a football against his door, the boy's reaction and subsequently that of his parents had generated a sense of futility, anxiety and uncertainty which in turn had acted as barriers to him considering future personal agency.

WC-P1: We got a load of abuse from him didn't we? (WC-P3: yeh.) And I went to see his Mum, well (p) that was a waste of time. And now his dad lives across here and every time he sees me he just gives me the evils, (p) you know, so [made a hand signal to indicate he wouldn't take this approach again].

In the first place, the boy had responded in a verbally aggressive way which was an unpleasant experience and prompted the participant to address the problem with the boy's mother. He described this action as a waste of time so emphasising his perceived futility in adopting this line of action. The ongoing intimidating response by the boy's father induced a sense of anxiety and uncertainty about potential repercussions in the future. Collectively these factors reduced the individual's motivation to act and deterred him from contemplating personal agency in the future.

In contrast to the above, data emerged that showed some research participants would avoid contacting the police because they feared antagonising other parties or suffering reprisals. For example, a questionnaire respondent who complained to me about mini-motorbikes damaging gardens voiced reluctance to inform the police for fear of reprisal:

Q-E9: I don't want to complain to the police because I don't want police cars parked outside my house. People would know that I've complained and I don't want any reprisals.

Views of a similar nature were evident in the data from the Location WW focus group in relation to the egg throwing and damage described earlier. However, here the fear of reprisal was seen as a deterrent to dealing with the problem directly:

WW-P: And um you know they're the sort you perhaps wouldn't quickly argue with because of their um attitude or the looks (slight laugh in voice) that they might do.

The unpleasant incident a research participant had experienced on a bus (outlined in Chapter 7) had a negative impact on her. The negative response

she got from the youths and the anxiety it induced adversely affected her sense of self-efficacy which in turn acted as a barrier to her exercising personal agency in the future:

WC-P2: [It] was quite terrifying, quite terrifying. So it is frightening and it does make you think twice about doing anything.

Data from another female participant suggests that personal circumstances appeared to influence her reluctance to deal with any perceived problems directly. She commented that her perceived self-efficacy was adversely affected by the fact that she was a divorcee living alone. Being able to call on someone else to intervene was obviously her preferred option:

KL-MJ: I live on my own; if I had a gentleman. If I had a gentleman to go out there, but I have nobody to do that.

Parents

Although in discussions on the causes of YP's anti-social behaviour lack of parental responsibility was a significant feature, it was surprising that less emphasis was put on the role parents could play in exercising personal agency. However, two participants did raise the subject of parental responsibility in two locations, these sentiments receiving approval from fellow participants.

E-K: To get parents on side. I mean unless parents are going to take an interest in their kids; what they're doing, what they're up and where they are you're always going to have a problem.

WC-G: But I think it comes from parents teaching right from wrong, I really do (P1: yeh), you know, I think it comes from the parents really, and if they're not bothered then what's the children going to do.

Both the above quotes emphasise the importance the participants placed on the role of parents in socialising their children; however, the emphasis in each is slightly different. In the first quote the focus is on parents needing to monitor behaviour; the second relates to parents having a responsibility to teach their children social and moral values.

Collective Agency

Interestingly, in the data the limited discussion on *collective agency* came from Locations WW and E, and in the latter it was confined to barriers which prevented it. Turning first to the data from Location WW, two focus group participants showed enthusiasm for collective agency. This was based on their participation in a formal project involving adults and YP and the positive personal experience they had shared. The discussion centred on the account of a village event organised by the local history society which consisted of an exhibition of the local photographic archives. To supplement the hard copies, it was hoped to exhibit further scanned photographs via computer screens. The dilemma the society had was that none of its members were skilled in setting up this display. By approaching the school several pupils adept in the use of computers volunteered to go along on the day and help out. For the adults an unexpected consequence of the intergenerational collaboration was their heightened positive impression of the YP expressed not only by society members but also by members of the general public visiting the exhibition. For the focus group participants this provided a good example of collective agency producing positive outcomes which stimulated the discussion on the need for more events like this, as one of the other participants noted:

WW-Ma: Perhaps adults need to have some opportunity to BE with younger people. Because in our own lives I don't really meet um younger people.

This quote clearly endorses the idea of collective agency, although interestingly no one intimated that they would make efforts in the future to replicate a similar experience.

Barriers

In Location E the focus group supported collective agency and voiced willingness to get involved in running local groups involving YP. They shared the idea that each had skills they could combine to collectively provide activities for YP which would reduce intergenerational tensions within the community. However, in their opinion, collective efficacy was marred by bureaucracy; as one participant explained 'there's too much paperwork'. Another participant said she would happily devote time to a community group but cited the amount of training needed to be undertaken as a deterrent to volunteering:

E-P: You've got to have this certificate, you've got to train for that, you've got to do the other. This course, that course bla de bla de bla course that like 6 months of work before you can even give your two hours a week.

The participant considered that these reasons for not getting involved could be generalised as being the view of many parents:

E-P: You'd have a problem finding parents that would be prepared to run [a community project] because of all the extra stuff that goes with it.

As stated earlier, in Locations KL and WC there was a dearth of coverage of collective agency. Whilst I have insufficient information to establish why this

omission was made in Location WC, I feel I am able to draw some tentative conclusions in respect of Location KL.

Firstly, from the commencement of the focus group it was evident that despite participants living in close geographical proximity to each other and had done so for at least three to four years, this was the first occasion that some had experienced direct contact. It also became obvious that there was tension based on inter-military differences. Some of the older residents were retired Army personnel and had been residents for over 40 years; and in their opinion for much of this time the Army had taken an active role in 'managing' the estate to a good standard. More recently the serving Army families had been replaced with RAF families, and the perception of the ex-army residents was that the 'management' of the estate had deteriorated. (This is a theme I will return to when talking about proxy agency). As one of the retired residents who is ex-army said:

KL-JH: We've lived with the army here for 43 years and never had any problem until the RAF came.
--

In addition to the above, the blame for the perceived anti-social behaviour voiced by the older residents was being directed at RAF families, to which other focus group participants took exception.

These factors raised above resonate with the work of Sampson, Raudenbush, and Earls (1997) and Sampson (2004) and builds on my discussion of self-efficacy earlier. Sampson Raudenbush, and Earls (1997) and Sampson (2004) not only talk of individual efficacy but also of neighbourhood efficacy; both are

strategies for achieving a desired outcome. However, a lack of social cohesion – a lack of solidarity and trust - can impede the realisation of neighbourhood efficacy (Sampson, 2004). Lev-Wiesel (2003, p.335) highlights five mediators which affect one's sense of community cohesion; *a sense of belonging, social ties, solidarity, perceived social support, and rootedness*. Sampson (2004) talks about the importance of shared beliefs, a sense of engagement and social networks in creating collective efficacy:

“My use of the term collective efficacy is meant to signify an emphasis on shared beliefs in a neighbourhood's capability for action to achieve an intended effect, coupled with an active sense of engagement on the part of residents. Some density of social networks is essential, to be sure, especially networks rooted in social trust”. (Sampson, 2004, p.108)

I would suggest that all of the neighbourhood dynamics described above could have prevented a sense of community cohesion thereby reducing residents' sense of self-efficacy or collective efficacy which in turn would reduce their motivation to consider collective agency as a strategy. This resonates with discussion in Chapter 3 (for example, Mackenzie, et al., 2010) regarding unwillingness to exercise informal social control in fragmented communities; a theme I return to in Chapter 9.

There is one further factor that I would suggest might have prevented participants from favouring collective agency. However, whilst making this additional suggestion I also exercise caution as to its validity because it is based on anecdotal evidence. The older residents who had instigated the complaints about the children in the area playing football had in the past tried to raise a neighbourhood petition. The petition was focused on mobilising the

local authority to erect 'no football' signs. This attempt failed due to lack of support by fellow residents. A sense of failure may have induced uncertainty about future self and collective efficacy which could have acted as a deterrent to contemplating collective agency.

Proxy Agency

Within the data, discussions also emerged which developed the theme of *proxy agency*, as Figure 7.1 shows. Two locations cited the Local Authority (the 'Council' and the 'Town Hall') as an appropriate channel for dealing with ASB. Location KL specifically named the police; Locations WW and WC suggested that schools should also play an active role.

To look at these views in more detail, and taking *local authority* first, its role suggested by participants consisted of various approaches. In two of the locations, based on past experience, participants suggested that LAs could make environmental alterations to prevent unacceptable behaviour. In one location vandalism to a bus shelter which had been a favoured meeting place for YP had resulted in the structure being removed:

WW-D: Not recently, but a few years ago when we had a bus stop at the [location name]. That was a gathering point and they used to pull it to pieces, smash it, and push walls down and all the rest of it nearby. But the simple answer to that was very successful, they took the bus shelter away (slight laugh) and that was the end of the trouble, yeh.

A similar intervention to that described above also took place in Location E but this time it was a bench which the YP continuously re-sited, and this practice was stopped by its removal.

Interestingly, in the discussion of the two solutions described above no one interpreted them as negative actions. For example, taking the bus shelter away was a positive act because it had prevented it being a site of vandalism; however, the fact that this meant it was no longer there for use by other local residents was not mentioned. Similarly, it was acknowledged that the confiscation of the bench had prevented YP resiting it, but no mention was made of this depriving other people of its use as an undesirable side effect. The data suggested that the youths moved the bench to a site preferred by them; one solution might have been the provision of an additional bench but this was not suggested.

In Location E focus group participants felt that the local authority should take responsibility for providing facilities and activities for YP – “a club of some sort where they can talk and practise different activities”.

In two of the locations participants felt that LAs should be responsible for responding to the complaint that parents were failing to control and discipline their children. Location E felt that parenting classes should be provided at an early stage in parenthood to teach the required skills. In contrast to this all participants in Location WC felt that LAs should be adopting a more punitive response. Fining or evicting parents for their children’s ASB was the favoured strategy:

WC-P1: I think the parents should be fined or, or if, if the kid's a repeat offender of anti-social behaviour, then they should be err, evicted and put somewhere else (Int: right) to get that anti-social behaviour away from this area. And if they're not evicted then (p) a heavy fine or (pp) even if they're given an ASBO

WC-P2: I think the heavy fine is more than evicting, because when you're evicting you're putting them somewhere else (WC-P3: that's right; WC-P1: yeh)

it's going to happen again. I think it needs the parents taking responsibility, and being fined.

Schools' Role

Schools were perceived to have a valuable role to play in socialising YP and teaching them how to behave not only in school but also in the wider community. However, their efficacy was considered to be impeded by bureaucracy, and more specifically teachers' authority had diminished and as a result disciplining pupils was less effective:

WW-J: It is because they've had all the authority taken away from them. Because I tell you if we spoke in class, I remember Mr H, if you spoke in his class he'd fling [did action to represent the teacher throwing something at pupils] [M laughed]. And today they'd get done for assault if they did that. But it works. The blackboard rubber, not at the girls, at the boys, he used to fling it, it was chalk at the girls.

WW-Ma: We used to have a teacher who did that as well. [General laughter and agreement that this practice worked].

WW-J: But it worked and you respected teachers. That was 20 odd years ago now but.

Related to the above discussion was the lack of respect shown to teachers (and authority generally) both by pupils and parents. The discussion centred on the nostalgic notion that when participants were at school discipline was much stricter and punishment harsher but effective. They felt that this in turn led to greater respect for your elders both in school and in authority (such as the police), and adult members of the wider community.

Police

Some of the blame for the occurrence of ASB had been placed at the feet of the police; for example because of their lack of effectiveness or presence in the local neighbourhoods, as was discussed in Chapter 6. I was surprised therefore that the role of the police did not attract a lengthy discussion in any of the locations. Out of the total data collected only three references were made to the perceived police role in governing ASB. The first was made by a questionnaire respondent in Location E who expressed satisfaction with the level of policing present in the village, saying that “there’s good police presence in [name of road in village]”.

In the course of discussion at the focus group in Location KL two participants expressed the view that the police could do more. The first participant suggested a proactive role, perhaps inferring that their visible presence may prevent ASB:

KL-MP: They could park in the village square at night. Keep an eye on things.

Another participant felt strongly that the police should listen to residents’ views and response should be based on these views:

KL-HW: They [the police] **MUST** take notice of the local residents and get something done about it.

As a counter argument to the above comments, members of the SNT voiced concern that residents were reluctant to speak directly to the children perceived to be causing the problem or report incidents through official channels. In a

telephone interview with the newly appointed local Neighbourhood Watch Co-ordinator he expressed frustration that the neighbours frequently complained some time after the event rather than trying to deal with the problem at the time. He explained that he had emphasised to one resident that:

KL-NWC: There's no point in keep coming and complaining. If the kids are running round the gardens nobody's coming out and saying come on lads, come on do you mind not doing that or whatever. They need to come and say to the kids, look I don't like you doing that don't do it.

Data collected from a local CPSO who routinely patrolled the area highlighted that he had tried previously to persuade a resident to submit a formal complaint, but this had not materialised:

KL-CPSO: I encouraged [name of resident] to make a complaint of criminal damage and the option was given at least 3-4 times during our conversation but [name of resident] just wanted this lad identifying and speaking to

Similar to the above, the previous NWC who had been personally affected by the perceived ASB had been given the opportunity to report problems through official channels, but had not taken it. In an email exchange between the CPSO and the RNWC the former stated that:

KL-CPSO: Just to finish off, [name of previous co-ordinator] was invited and attended the last NAT's meeting back in January. This would have been an ideal opportunity for him to raise this as a concern but for what ever reason it was never mentioned.

It is not possible from the data collected to draw any firm conclusions about why residents failed to report problems to the SNT. However, in referring back to a discussion in Chapter 6, this may have resulted from their perception that doing

so in the past had been futile. To reiterate what one participant said which received support from others:

KL-HW: [It's] all been reported to the authorities, but nobody takes any bloody notice. No actions ever taken.

RAF

One of the interesting dimensions emerging from the data in Location KL was the significance of the past and current presence of military personnel in the immediate area. As mentioned earlier in this chapter there was clearly tension between the older residents who were ex-Army and young families currently serving with the RAF. When the Army had been stationed locally there was an acceptance that it had a role in policing the residential area, and during this period residents could approach the Army for help in resolving community issues. As discussed in Chapter 6, certainly on the part of ex-Army residents, this was perceived to have changed and standards to have dropped. As one participant who lived on the estate but not in the immediate vicinity of the problems explained:

KL-BC: I'm ex Army erm I used to be stationed here when the camp was Army and what used to happen here was that if you were a soldier and your garden wasn't kept spick and span and whatever, and the other thing was if your children were out of control you tended, excuse my language, your arse would be dragged across the hot coals by your boss. The RAF seem to have, their kind a outlook is that what happens at home is nothing to do with them.

Given the above it is interesting that the older ex-Army residents did not suggest that the RAF should play a greater role governing the problems experienced locally.

One further general comment which was made by a member of the Location KL focus group was in connection with a specific strategy she considered to be most appropriate. That was to work with the different groups separately, particularly as a first step to improving intergroup relations:

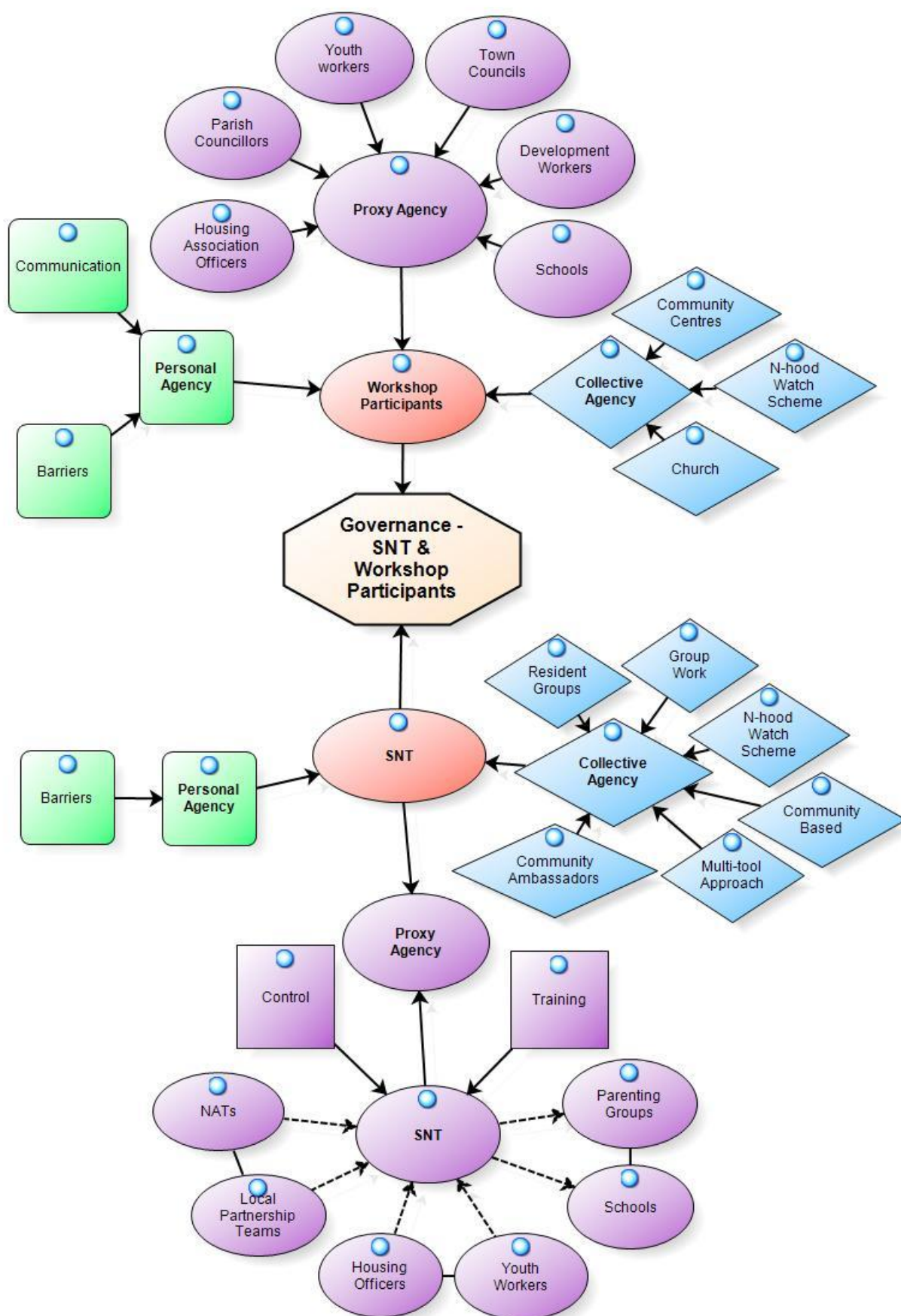
KL-BF: Yeh. To be honest I think that's the only way you could really go forward with the things that's happening in (The Close) because I think there's been too many things said that to get them all together at one point would be [counter-productive].

So far in this chapter I have dedicated my attention to the data collected from residents in the four locations from which agency emerged as a theme. Further to this, as mentioned earlier, data collected from the SNT representing Locations KL and WC, and the participants of the booklet workshops were similarly coded. A total of 29 participants are represented in the data. It is to this data that I now turn.

Governance – Views of SNT and Workshop Participants

A distinction to be made between the data discussed above and that below is that the former relates to residents' views on governance of ASB in a more general sense; the latter specifically considers governance and agency in relation to the implementation of the booklet. As mentioned at the start of the chapter, the focus group participants had not had sight of the booklet prior to data being collected. The coding process was similar to that used for the data discussed earlier in this chapter. In Figure 7.2 the SNT data is analysed into more codes than is the Workshop participants' data, reflecting differences in the range of themes which emerged.

Figure 7.2: Governance – Views of SNT and Workshop Participants



Personal Agency

It was interesting to find that in the data collected from the workshops and SNT discussion on personal agency was limited. One related issue raised, that echoed data from the residents in Locations E, WW, and KL discussed earlier, was the need for individuals to communicate. More specifically, one participant suggested that the different “generations need to communicate” in a proactive sense to “encourage a sense of community”. The local CPSO made the point that, in his view:

KL-CPSO: I do believe there needs to be some give and take from both sides.

In a telephone interview with the newly appointed local NWC he expressed frustration that the residents affected by the football-related problem failed to exercise personally agency. Rather they frequently complained some time after the event instead of trying to deal with the problem at the time. He explained that he had emphasised to one resident that:

KL-NWC: There's no point in keep coming and complaining. If the kids are running round the gardens nobody's coming out and saying come on lads, come on do you mind not doing that or whatever. They need to come and say to the kids, look I don't like you doing that don't do it.

Barriers

As was the case in the earlier data, barriers to personal agency were raised.

Two of the workshop participants voiced concern that individuals may be deterred from exercising personal agency due to feelings of anxiety generated

by their perceptions of a situation. The first participant felt that “an elder person on their own would feel intimidated”. A second cited ‘nervousness’ as potentially impacting on older people’s level of self-efficacy which would result in proxy agency via the police being the preferred option:

WS-2: I do think many older people may still be too nervous to approach them though and find calling the police an easier and safer option.

This is a valid assumption to make based on data from residents discussed earlier in this chapter and in Chapter 6 where negative perceptions of YP, fear of reprisal, or past frightening incidents were cited as deterrents to approaching YP directly. In the discussion between members of the SNT complainants’ biased and fixed views were identified as barriers, and these will be discussed in the following section.

Collective Agency

The discussion at the workshops which resonated with the notion of collective agency was relatively limited. In analysing the data it emerged that discussion in these forums focused largely on considering through which channels the booklet might be distributed. It was suggested that the “key is comprehensive distribution and ensuring people read and digest the principles”. The channels through which this process might be successful were Neighbourhood Watch Schemes (NWS), Community Centres and the local Church.

The data collected from SNT members provided a rich source of data relating to collective agency. In common with the workshop participants, the SNT identified Neighbourhood Watch Schemes as an appropriate channel, but also suggested Community Ambassadors, and resident groups. Indeed, one member of the SNT viewed the local Neighbourhood Watch Schemes as a particularly fruitful channel through which to introduce the booklet:

SNT3: A good place to use this (booklet), some of the Neighbourhood Watch groups that we've got running, umm, lots of Neighbourhood Watch groups keep going because of anti-social behaviour and this would be absolutely marvellous I think to roll out at one of their [meetings] um, you know, and this booklet and show it to them on one of their nights.

Community Ambassadors

Community Ambassadors had been a recent innovation within the SNT's area for which a training course was being developed. The scheme drew on local volunteers who would be coached in public speaking and community engagements skills. A suggestion that received unanimous agreement from the SNT was the inclusion of training sessions on the use of the booklet. Once equipped with the training, Community Ambassadors could act as facilitators to cascade this training to groups of residents.

The involvement of residents' groups was also suggested as an effective outlet for promoting the recommendations made in the booklet about intergenerational interaction. With a specific residents group in mind, a community development officer considered the booklet appropriate for dealing with "a perennial problem of residents complaining about teenagers using local playgrounds in residential areas as a meeting place". For one SNT member one particular resident group,

'involving women of a certain age', came to mind as a good example of where the booklet might be effective. He described the group as being situated in "a predominantly middle-class area where perceptions of ASB occurring are greater than actual ASB". This last comment on misperceptions of the prevalence of ASB is an interesting one and corresponds to the discussion relating to Graphs 5.9 - 5.11. Although some respondents had not had negative experiences or had had positive experiences, they still perceived THA as a very/fairly big problem. Members of the residents' group met once a month to discuss current issues and, according to the SNT member, liked to get involved in addressing them. The ASB Officer felt that this would make a good forum for discussion of the booklet and that members would be receptive to its ideas. Expanding on this he suggested that low-key coffee mornings in general should be considered:

SNT3: Lower level, coffee mornings that sort of thing, informal, get the booklet out, have a drink, go through it all, introduce it that way and you know things like that.

The above comments gave an interesting insight into the importance placed on utilising a "cherry picking" approach and identifying the most receptive and effective channels through which to implement the booklet.

As well as talking about the various channels through which the booklet could be implemented the SNT expanded its discussion to consider specific details of the format of implementation. One of the themes that emerged from the discussion was the notion of group work and from the data it was clear that this

was preferred to speaking to residents on an individual basis. Group work was seen as a much more effective way of dealing with a scenario where an individual's reasons for complaint were deemed unjustified, and it was difficult to deal with an individual with fixed negative views:

SNT3: If you've got the one serial complainer and speak to them on their own they very much got their fixed view and you're not going to change their mind.

The SNT member referred to a previous intergenerational group meeting he had convened aimed at resolving a problem stemming from adults' complaints about YP's perceived ASB. As the meeting progressed and the YP had had the chance to "put their side across" all but one of the adults became sympathetic towards them. What transpired then was a discussion between the sympathetic adults and the 'serial complainant' and a change of viewpoint by the latter. As the SNT member who favoured group work emphasised:

SNT3: I think the police officer seeing them [the complainants] individually you're not going to ever change that mindset, but if you can get five houses either side and get them together and you've got people with, you know, who haven't got that total blinkered look you've got more of a chance because when he's in his own peer group he's actually going to have more change than when he's on his own. I think so, I think it's going to be VERY VERY difficult for us or anybody seeing an individual to get them to change, but if you've got their own peer group when they're not feeling as much pressure and you've got others saying 'you grumpy old git why are', you know, err 'think about it I knew you when you were a kid', then I think we'll do it that way.

Peer influence in a group environment was raised again by another SNT member and reinforced the argument for utilising collective agency:

SNT4: I feel that it will be more effective to give the booklet out to small groups rather than one to one. If one person in a group makes a positive comment about the booklet, others may understand and get it.

Multi-tool approach

A further suggestion that emerged from the data which advocated collective agency was the notion of combining the booklet with other 'tools' available to the SNT. The example given was a piece of equipment called the 'alertbox'. This was an electronic device issued to a group of neighbours as a result of one or more of them having an experience which caused them alarm or distress. Examples given were "suspicious characters in the area", "trouble-maker", or "unknown/unwanted callers". If further problems arose the victim activated the 'alertbox' which transmitted a signal to other residents, one of whom would respond and potentially try to deal with the problem. This was a device aimed at encouraging residents to resolve problems for themselves and work together on a collective basis. In areas where residents had been receptive to this approach they might also be prepared to use the booklet and utilise its recommendations.

Community Based Approach

In the view of all the members of the SNT a community based, collective approach was an attractive proposition, most specifically because it could potentially relieve their workload:

SNT2: Well, it gets the community doing the work really I think; those people who are volunteers and to do the lower level community work.
--

An initial read of the above quote may lead one to think that members of the SNT want to re-allocate the workload to the 'community' and 'volunteers'. However, the final section of the sentence qualifies their intention; that the involvement of the 'community' and 'volunteers' would be restricted to 'lower

level community work'. The data showed a consensus that this was a sensible use of resources, releasing SNT members to focus on the "more difficult cases". An inference to be made from this is that the SNT members would maintain control and responsibility overall, and this issue will be discussed further in the next section devoted to Proxy Agency.

Proxy Agency

The bulk of the data that emerged which related to *proxy* agency emanated from the meetings, telephone conversations and emails involving the SNT members. The data I collected from the Workshop participants relating to their views on appropriate action within proxy agency were limited. Overall the data provided an insight into what participants considered to be appropriate formal channels through which the booklet might be disseminated; the channels identified are shown on Figure 7.2. As most of the data were collected from the SNT this is the main focus of the discussion that follows, although the data from the Workshops are also included.

In analysing the SNT data it became obvious that, as an organisation, members saw themselves at the hub of decision-making regarding the booklet's implementation, as illustrated in Figure 7.2. I will return to this issue in more detail later in this section which will include a discussion of the sub-themes of 'control' and 'training'. First I will discuss the other sub-themes emanating from the data that encircle the SNT node in Figure 7.2, starting with 'parenting groups' and 'schools'.

Parenting Groups and Schools

I have purposely grouped these two sub-themes together as they are both considered to be channels through which the SNT could introduce the booklet (this relationship is depicted by a connecting line on Figure 7.2). Looking firstly at the parenting group, this was a forum which already existed and was set up to work with parents who were categorized by the LA as failing to successfully deal with their children's problem behaviour. Prior to my meeting with the SNT a team member had tentatively introduced the booklet to a group of parents with whom he was currently working:

SNT3: They, actually, when they looked at this (held up copy of booklet) thought it was the business, thought it were really, really good. Um, I didn't go into great detail because like [name of colleague] says, there's a lot of work to be done on this, so err, the parenting group were saying it were spot on.

According to the data, the parents had gone on to say that they felt the approach being promoted in the booklet was appropriate to address not only their children's behaviour but also other family-related tensions they experienced. They also felt it was something they could read through with their children. Clearly they saw the booklet as a tool for improving their own self-efficacy, and it was due to this reported positive reaction that the SNT agreed that part of their implementation strategy should include these kinds of groups.

Another channel through which the SNT's own members could implement the booklet was schools. In particular they pinpointed using it as part of the Personal, Social and Health Education curriculum delivered in schools. More specifically it would be appropriate to use the booklet in sessions involving children with special educational needs who do a project where ASB is the main

theme. This was an interesting insight into how the booklet might be used.

Originally adults had been the intended target audience, but increasingly it was being suggested that it could be used with YP.

A further interesting observation I made regarding the discussion on parenting groups and schools as appropriate channels for implementation was the fact that the SNT members were seeing it as their role to lead the sessions rather than delegate this responsibility. However, data did emerge that signified collaboration between the SNT and two other professional bodies working within neighbourhoods, which would also take a lead in implementation.

Youth Workers and Housing Officers

Youth Workers within the context of youth clubs, and Connexions personal advisers, were considered a useful resource and could help to address the issue mentioned above in relation to raising YPs' awareness of the message contained in the booklet. Connexions was a New Labour initiative set up to provide a support service for young people, for example, in the area of education and work.

Housing Associations were also identified as an outlet for the booklet, but more specifically Housing Officers who dealt with general everyday issues associated with the housing stock they manage and have a close link with tenants. One member of the SNT was keen to involve Housing Officers because:

SNT4: They get involved with lower level stuff – for example complaints of teenagers playing football near houses.

A further suggestion was that the booklet could be included in new tenants' "welcome pack" which Housing Officers introduce at the "initial sign up". This strategy would reinforce the Housing Associations' expectations of tenants and standards of conduct required. Two Housing Association Officers attending one of the booklet Workshops also voiced strong support for this strategy for similar reasons.

Neighbourhood Action Teams and Local Partnership Teams

Whilst not expected to take a direct lead in the decision-making and/or implementation processes within the proxy agency approach two groups/organisations were named as conduits for providing information upon which the SNT would exercise judgement on appropriate action.

The first of these groups was *Neighbourhood Action Teams (NAT)* which comprised the police, the local authority, schools and representatives from local neighbourhoods, businesses and organizations.

SNT1: There are issues that um that come to Neighbourhood Action Teams aren't there which are really low level - when [individuals] start mumbling right at the very beginning and it hasn't got to that level, you know, maybe not even hit the matrix but it's like an early warning, int it that, that there might be something on the horizon, and I'm not suggesting that we would use it all the time, but it might be there that it be an early warning.

The data suggested that there had been past occasions when the SNT had not become aware of low level, minor cases of ASB when they first occurred which

was seen as a stumbling block to dealing with issues at the outset and preventing problems escalating. The quote above suggests that whilst it may not always be appropriate, there may be occasions when early neighbourhood intelligence directed at the NAT who are at “grassroots level” might help to identify problems where the implementation of the booklet could potentially be effective.

It was also suggested that the *Local Partnership Teams* comprising the Police, CPSOs and ASB Officers could play a similar role to that of the NAT. As a first step, LPTs would convey collected information to the SNT who would judge the required response and the possible direct involvement of a LPT.

Safer Neighbourhood Team

Coming from the data was a clear indication that the SNT envisaged playing a pivotal role in terms of developing and delivering training in the use of the booklet, and also in maintaining control of when and where the booklet would be implemented.

Training

As part of the overall plan when the booklet was initially being designed it was intended that a training package would be developed that could be cascaded to the relevant social and professional groups. Subsequently training would be cascaded to residents. In analysing the data collected from the SNT it was clear that participants were in unanimous agreement that what they “had got to avoid doing is shoving it through somebody's letterbox”. Cascade training was

preferred for several reasons. Firstly developing the training content centrally would ensure its uniformity which would mean that “everybody's giving the same input”. This method was also seen as an efficient and effective way of delivering the training

SNT1: One person from here could possibly train 12 at that time, so you know provide training, a couple of hours training.

Another member of the team gave an example of how the training could work:

SNT3: I think, that's the way. Go out to people like the Neighbourhood Watch and you can cascade train them and then they can deliver it to their residents' groups.

This clearly demonstrates the SNT's belief in using proxy agency aimed at improving residents' self-efficacy to promote personal and collective agency. This resonates with one of the original intentions of the booklet model, that some of the responsibility for dealing with low level ASB would be relocated from proxy level to collective and personal levels of agency.

Control

Not only was the cascade training and implementation method favoured because it was considered effective, the data showed that there was a consensus that “with cascade training it means that the burden's being shared”. However, within the data there was a strong sense that the SNT members felt that proxy agency was important and they had an important organizational role to play as well as ensuring best use of resources. Emerging from the data was the notion that it should be members of the SNT who held responsibility for evaluating each case and determining the appropriateness of utilising the

booklet in dealing with reported cases of ASB. One participant suggested that “I don't think we want to let go of these”. The quote below represents a consensus of the team’s view that they should maintain overall control of implementation:

SNT4: Yeh, we're not giving books out. Cascade training to let them know, but then as soon as they identify an issue they're coming to us to say they want some books. We're not going to issue the books until they come to us to say this is the issue and we're going to use Let's Talk. And we'll say, yeh that's appropriate.

A further stream of discussion emerged from the data which countered the original assumptions that the booklet model would only be appropriate to use in cases of low level ASB. There were two scenarios discussed where it was considered the booklet could not be used; one was in Location WC. The team felt that the problems there, as discussed in Chapter 5, related to criminal behaviour and required different intervention. Similarly it was thought that the point at which the Youth Offending Team got involved in dealing with YP’s behaviour, the level of the problem had gone beyond considering using the booklet:

SNT1: It can't be youth offending team because they're the kids, they're the ones who are in the criminal, or even if they were on the edge I would say they are little bit further on than what this is (pointing to copy of booklet).

Further discussion, however, led to the view that the booklet need not be limited to cases of low level anti-social behaviour. (To determine the level of severity of individual cases of ASB the SNT utilise the SARA methodology explained in Chapter 5).

What emerged from the data was the potential benefit of introducing the booklet into a case where the incidence of high level ASB had been successfully lowered.

SNT3: The high ones we do a lot of work in it and we have, basically, we starting at that (uses hand to show high level) and then say after two months we got it down to that (uses hand to show medium level).

It was felt that at this point the SNT would “already have got the trust of the adults” because they perceived the team to be effective. The perception was that the improved situation resulting from the successful work carried out by the SNT would mean that “the tolerance levels have already changed because we’ve already worked with gaining their trust”. One benefit of introducing the booklet at this point was perceived to be its potential for helping to keep the improvement sustained.

One previous case was cited as an example when the booklet could have usefully been utilised. It was a situation where the ASB of YP was considered low level by the SNT. However, as a result of a neighbourhood survey being carried out by the SNT the level of the problem was classified as mid-range because of the frequency of the behaviour and the numbers of YP involved. The team agreed that “the booklet would have been perfect on that problem”. The conclusion drawn from the above discussion was that “it’s not necessarily only the low level cases” (SNT3) that should be the focus of implementation.

Interestingly the views expressed above by the SNT contrasted to those of the Police and CPSOs who were present at two of the booklet workshops. They voiced their opinion strongly that the booklet should be restricted to low level

ASB only and “needed to be out there when the problem first kicks off”. As one policewoman explained:

By the time we get involved in cases they have gone beyond the point where the booklet is likely to be effective. Residents have already been out and shouted at the teenagers hanging around and relationships are very strained.

Summary

As stated at the start of this chapter, the data under discussion were collected in response to the question ‘What do you think can be done to tackle perceived anti-social behaviour?’ The aim was to gain an understanding of participants’ views on governance of ASB for two reasons. Firstly, to what extent their views resonated with the approach promoted in the booklet. Secondly what implications this might have on an implementation strategy.

Emanating from the data was a clear indication that participants saw governance of ASB coming from different streams. It was at this point in my analysis that the Social Cognitive Theory emerged; in particular the concepts of *agency* in its three forms, and *self-efficacy*.

In relation to the booklet, it was interesting to see that nine out of the 26 participants in Locations E, WW, KL and WC had exercised or promoted the use of personal agency. Also notable was the fact that discussions in two of the four focus groups were not confined to personal agency in the reactive sense but included a proactive approach. Encouraging was the presence of data which suggested that out of those who supported personal agency the majority favoured a softer approach which resonates with the recommended approach in

the booklet. Similarly, the participants' reference to the importance of interacting and communicating with YP echoed the booklet's message. In this respect there was a synergy between the data from the focus groups, workshops and SNT. Across the data collectively there was reference made to the importance of interpersonal interaction and communication. The booklet promotes interaction between affected residents and the YP perceived to be causing nuisance behaviour. One participant in Location KL suggested that interpersonal communication should occur between the complainant and YP's parents. Whilst this was raised by only one person it is nevertheless a point worthy of recognition, and will be returned to in the discussion in Chapter 8.

An interesting finding emerging from the data was the fact that one-third of focus group participants identified themselves as active agents in dealing with perceived anti-social behaviour. Given the fact that in this thesis the behaviour of YP is a central theme, the focus of the discussion on agency could have been on the role of parents and their responsibility to monitor and positively influence their children's behaviour. This was not the case.

A useful contribution to the findings was the discussion relating to perceived barriers to exercising personal agency. This theme arose in all the sets of data discussed in this chapter. Based on the SCT it is reasonable to assume that an individual's level of self-efficacy could determine whether or not she/he might consider using the booklet recommendations. If they perceive this as low they are less likely to want to initiate personal agency and it was important to gain an insight into what participants identified as adversely affecting self-efficacy. All participants with the exception of the SNT identified negative emotional

responses such as anxiety, nervousness, feeling intimidated as barriers. These views were either based on personal experience or perceptions of how others might feel. Interestingly the discussion by the SNT of barriers to personal agency had a different emphasis. In particular one participant focused on some people's inability to view issues from a different perspective and this marred their ability to exercise the type of personal agency advocated in the booklet. It was for this reason that the SNT promoted the idea of implementing the booklet via group work – collective agency.

Turning to collective agency, due to a direct positive experience of focus group participants in Location WW this level of agency was advocated. The SNT identified several streams through which collective agency could be mobilised. From the data collected only one Location identified barriers to collective agency. Location E participants, whilst showing a willingness to be part of collective agency, had the perception that this would be hindered by too much bureaucracy being imposed on them. This clearly negatively impacted on levels of perceived self-efficacy. To what extent this is a consideration for the future implementation of the booklet is not known, but should be borne in mind in future planning.

In Location KL I also identified other potential barriers to collective agency, such as a lack of social cohesion, and lack of motivation due to past failure of collective agency. However, it is important to stress that these barriers emanated from my personal reflections on and interpretation of related information provided rather than as a direct result of analysing data.

Perhaps not surprisingly, the participants of the focus groups advocated proxy agency as a means of dealing with anti-social and nuisance behaviour. Institutions specifically mentioned were LAs, Schools, and the Police. In contrast, an unexpected outcome of the data collected from the SNT was the level of control they wanted to maintain regarding the implementation of the booklet. They were in favour of cascading the training for the booklet implementation to groups beyond their immediate team and were seeking to encourage individual residents to exercise personal agency in line with the booklet. This was what had been envisaged in the development of the booklet, where it was assumed that the cascade training process would result in organisations such as SNTs becoming less involved. What emerged from the data was the SNT's desire to maintain control and to manage personal and collective agency more directly. This will be discussed further in Chapter 9.

An additional change in thinking by the SNT was the level of ASB at which the booklet could be used. Originally it was felt that the use of the booklet should be confined to low level cases. However, in the course of discussion at the meeting of SNT members it was felt that it could be incorporated into strategies for tackling more serious cases at a point when some improvement had been affected.

As described in Chapter 5, the problem in Location KL involved children playing football and the related noise and damage to gardens, leading to a four year history of complaints by retired residents. Although residents considered it a serious problem, the SNT decided this would be a prime location in which to introduce the booklet as a pilot project. I led a session with residents where the

booklet was introduced. Whilst it is outside the scope of my thesis to evaluate this process in depth, a short resumé of the event is provided. Briefly, this involved talking the participants through the booklet content, supplementing this with anecdotal vignettes I had collected from various parties in the past. These helped to reinforce some of the booklet content, particularly in relation to the section which encourages the reader to view scenarios from a different perspective. This took place in early July and it was agreed that the participants would each have a copy of the booklet and consider using it if the need arose during the summer school holidays. I agreed to get in touch with them in early autumn for an update on the situation, the results of which are considered in Chapter 8.

Chapter 8

Let's Talk Implementation Pilot

As planned, after the summer holidays I contacted the Location KL focus group participants to ascertain whether or not there had been any perceived improvement in the problem. For the reasons explained in Chapter 4, rather than arranging another focus group as my research tool I chose to interview participants individually by telephone. Not all participants of the focus group were spoken to directly, for several reasons. Firstly, one married couple withdrew after the focus group, another resident was in hospital, and two interviewees whose husbands had also been at the focus group opted to speak on behalf of themselves and their spouse. In total seven individuals were contacted. Whilst this was a small number, four were residents who had been directly affected by the problems reported, and one lived in the immediate area and was familiar with the issues but did not personally consider the children playing in the area a problem. The remaining two were neighbours who lived on the same road but away from the T-junction 'trouble spot'; one was a close friend of the complainants but did not share their views about the children's behaviour.

The data collected related to four different topics of discussion; the current scale of the ASB-related problem, reasons for change, participants' views on the booklet, and finally their thoughts on continuing the Let's Talk project. Data representing each of these themes are outlined in turn in this Chapter.

Once again open coding based on the inductive approach was used to analyse the data which explained participants' views on the level of the football-related problem described above and their reactions to the booklet. A process of reading and re-reading the data resulted in descriptive themes being formulated. For data relating to the reasons for improvements in The Close, and participants' views on continuing the project, the Social Cognitive Theory facilitated theoretical coding similar to that described in Chapter 6.

An Update on Adult Residents' Perceptions of ASB

In contrast to the scale of the past problems discussed in Chapter 6, it was clear from the data that residents who had complained about football-related activities now felt the problems had improved. One of the previous complainants stated that since I last spoke to her in July the problem had reduced:

KL-JH: There's been nothing since and there's been no footballing since ooh end of June, no problems at all. Just haven't been playing football; all of a sudden it's just stopped. There's been nothing, nothing like what we've had before. There's been nothing at all, you know all summer.

The above quote gave the impression that the children had not been seen in the area where past problems had been reported; another previous complainant stated that "on the whole it's been quieter". Closer analysis of the data showed that residents had seen children but less frequently than in the past.

KL-MJ: There's only been twice they've been out there. It was only, they were five minutes here and five minutes there as I say on two occasions. I saw them Sunday.

Another resident living in the area where previous problems had been reported remarked:

KL-BF: To be honest I very rarely see them playing out there now. I think there's a few times they have done when it's you know at the week ends when it's not been like bad weather or whatever.

Whilst participants intimated that the problems had diminished, two were guardedly optimistic in this respect and voiced reservation as to whether the current situation would be sustained:

KL-MP: Touch wood we don't seem to get the football problem which was the main, you know one of the worst problems. Keep your fingers crossed; touch wood.

KL-MJ: Ummm, on the whole very good. I don't like to say too much in case, in case it takes off again. We like to touch wood sort of thing. I don't like to err tempt fate shall we say (laugh).

These last two quotes echo some of the reservations discussed later regarding the continuation of the project.

Alternative activities

One of the complainants specifically speaking about the children who had been the focus of complaints in the past said that "the kids still play on their own garden". The reduced frequency of children playing outdoors had clearly had a positive impact on the complainants, but the data also suggested that the fact that when they were seen they were not playing football was a significant factor. Now rather than playing football they were occasionally seen:

KL-MJ: On their bikes or on their roller skates or their scooters, just running or on their front garden.

Also emerging from the data was the fact that the fewer sightings of the children were thought to be because the older siblings within the 'problem' family were

now old enough to take the younger ones to the park or the football field. This was the assumption made by one of the interviewees:

KL-MJ: They are going down the park. I saw them Sunday; the bigger ones were taking the little ones because they had the football boots in their hands.

This assumption was confirmed by a resident who was a close friend of the parents of the children generally blamed for the problem behaviour:

KL-BF: They have started going, because there is a football pitch that is set up near here which they have started going to during the day. The elder brother was taking the younger boys, the six year olds down there, so um they were going down there.

Data suggests that one of the complainants was pleased that this was now the case, and with reference to the children going to the park said that “to me this is what they should be doing”.

Impact

From analysing the data it was clear that the improvement had met with enthusiasm on the part of complainants. Adjectives used to convey their feelings were “wonderful”, “absolutely wonderful”, “very nice”, “lovely”, and “unbelievable”. Another complainant in referring to the improved situation said that “this is how it should be”.

The parent of young children quoted above described the absence of children in the area as:

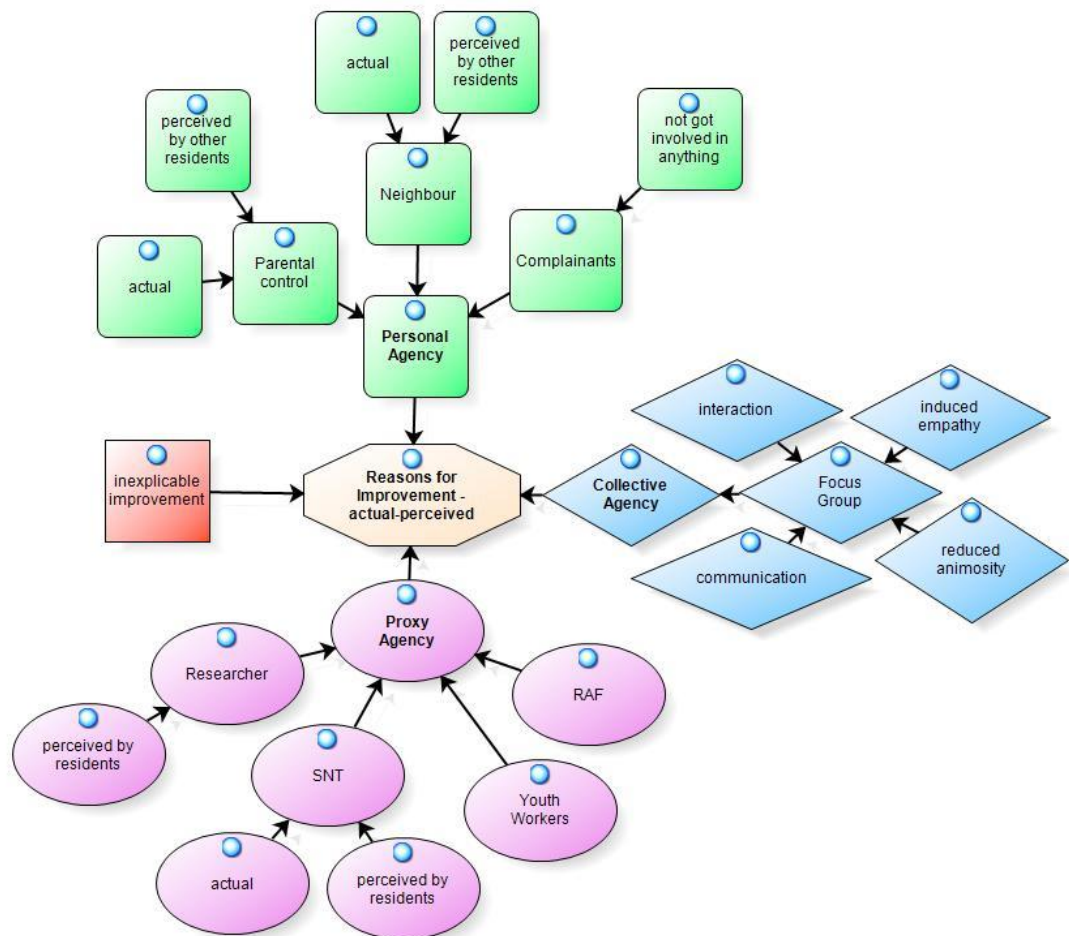
KL-BF: It's just been weird; that there's hardly been any kids out in the summer holidays. It's, I know to me it seems a bit odd.

Interestingly we have two very different interpretations of the up to date situation. For the older residents who had previously complained, the absence of the children had provided a “wonderful” outcome. In contrast, the younger neighbour felt it incongruous that children were not playing in The Close. This dichotomy clearly illustrates why tensions exist in this localised area.

Reasons for Improvement

During the telephone interviews participants were also asked if they were aware of any factors that had contributed to the improvement. Within the data that emerged the concept of agency was a recurring theme which led to theoretical coding similar to that used in the previous chapter. Figure 8.1 below shows the themes of personal, collective and proxy agency as well as the sub-themes that also emerge from the data. These are discussed in detail below along with the additional theme that emerged ‘inexplicable improvement’.

Figure 8.1: Reasons for Improvement – Actual/Perceived



Personal Agency

Under the theme of ‘personal agency’, from the data I identified three channels that potentially could have influenced the improved situation; ‘complainants’, ‘parental control’, and ‘neighbour’. Interestingly the data collected from interviewees focused, with the exception of two comments, on ‘neighbour’ and ‘parental control’. The only two references made about complainants’ potential involvement in dealing with the problem were to confirm that they personally had done nothing. One previous complainant confirmed that because no problems had occurred over the summer, she “had not got involved in

anything". Another resident who had also been one of the complainants, but felt the problem had improved stated:

KL-MJ: Whether nobody did anything (pause) you know we didn't go round, we didn't do anything.

The data relating to neighbour, and parental control divided into sub-themes; this provided an interesting comparison of what complainants perceived had occurred against what was reported by the neighbour (BF) cited below or the CPSO to have actually occurred.

Neighbour

In the context of the discussion on personal agency 'neighbour' mainly refers to one resident in The Close. She was a member of the focus group and a friend and neighbour of the young family accused of causing the problems discussed in Chapter 5. One complainant perceived the neighbour to have been instrumental in influencing the improvement, saying that "I think she might have gone back to her friends and told them how we felt". Interestingly, the complainant added to this that "we've never really had a dialogue with them face to face because you just see the children really". This comment again emphasises the lack of connectedness between residents referred to in Chapter 7. However, it may also indicate unwillingness on the part of some to personally respond, preferring to leave it to others. Possibly the perception that others have acted might be used as an excuse not to act. One complainant assumed that a focus group participant had informed non-attending parents of the issues discussed at the focus group. Her comment was:

KL-MP: Without sort of (p) obviously they knew, people around were obviously told about it.

Another elderly resident echoed this perception by saying:

KL-MJ: It was as though the parents got the message without us doing anything if you know what I mean.

In fact, the neighbour confirmed that she had spoken with families whose children had in the past played football in the vicinity of the older residents' houses. This she had done because none of these parents were able to attend the focus group, and she thought it was important that they knew what had been said:

KL-BF: I've spoken to the parents of the children who were playing football basically because um basically none of them were able to make the meeting I thought I'd tell them what had been said and what was going on. I thought they needed to know what the impression was of them.

Parental Control

Expanding on the discussion above, emerging from the data was the notion that parents had internalised the sentiments conveyed and acted to curb their children's unwanted behaviour. One complainant interviewed made the assumption that having "got the message" parents had taken steps to restrict the children's play area to their own gardens, and reduced the numbers of children congregating in close proximity to the older residents:

KL-MJ: I don't know whether the parents got the message that we were having meetings to do with (pause) your's your group. I think they probably put their foot down and said right you play on your own grass which they have done. I don't have a problem with that. I think they've put a stop to that (p) them coming round.

Based on the data provided by the neighbour who had spoken with relevant parents, it appears that empathy was shown by parents towards the older residents:

KL-BF: They appreciated that the kids shouldn't, well not that they shouldn't play there but that it could be annoying for other people so.

The data also suggests that parents reflected on what they had been told and took steps to try to reduce the level of the problem:

KL-BF: Parents have taken it on board and have tried to stop the kids playing football out there and stuff so. They'd told the boys not to play football out there any way. The kids got told by all the parents not to go near.

Collective Agency

Focus Group

Emerging from the data was evidence that interviewees linked attending the focus group with a reduction in the level of the problem. More specifically the view was that it had provided the opportunity for individuals to interact with other members of the community, particularly those who had not done so before. The focus group was also deemed to have benefited participants because it had provided a forum at which they could communicate their views. As two of the complainants explained:

KL-MP: The meeting was good in so much as that um it got people together. It was after that meeting it did calm down.

KL-MJ: So it certainly, it certainly didn't do any harm us going to the meeting. Well I think it did a lot of good by just going to your meeting, your focus group. Since then we don't have any problem with them.

The second interviewee quoted above also talked about the value of being able to communicate directly to parents the degree to which residents were unhappy about children's use of outdoor space locally and how it impacted on residents:

KL-MJ: So in actual fact I think us complaining and you becoming involved I think it probably helped the situation because it was like you know, not frightened, but they knew that we had very strong feelings about it.

Another resident who had not been directly affected by the perceived anti-social behaviour emphasised the benefits of communicating candidly on issues of tension. She felt that:

KL-GS: There was a lot of issues that night wasn't there. I think it's good for the community to be honest.

The above participant was a resident who did not know the complainants and prior to the focus group was unaware of their issues. Her comment illustrates an important issue, namely that bringing people together in an environment such as a focus group can prove a very effective catalyst in raising awareness and enabling a better mutual understanding to develop. This broadening of perceptions was indeed my underlying approach in developing the booklet.

One interviewee felt that the discussions that took place at the focus group had been disseminated and this had contributed to the improved situation. The view was that the focus group had served as a catalyst for raising awareness of the problems beyond that forum; extending awareness to residents who had not been able to attend:

KL-MJ: Without sort of obviously they knew, people around were obviously told about it, that didn't come to it and I think that was enough to make them say to their children, well you're not allowed to go out there and play in the road.

Data emanating from one telephone interview suggested that the group of residents affected by the children's behaviour joined the focus group with the specific intention of airing their views. One older resident who was a friend of the complainants but had no direct experience of the problems had been told:

KL-NS: They were all going up err you know to sort of put their view forward about football and that.

Based on all of the quotes above, it is fair to conclude that the focus group had allowed the complainants to achieve their aim.

Reduced Animosity: As the facilitator of the focus group I felt a sense of hostility between some of the older residents and young members. These tensions derived from the views on children's behaviour and the blame for this being targeted at military families. As noted in Chapter 7, the latter was picked up by a focus group member who was not directly involved in the problems, either as a parent or affected resident. She identified herself as an 'ex-army wife' and took exception, as did two other members of the focus group, to the blame for problem behaviour by children being directed at military families.

Data collected subsequently during the telephone interview revisited the fact that there was a perceived level of tension during the focus group. One of the interviewees felt that:

KL-BF: The animosity between different neighbours [at the focus group] was quite bad.

Another interviewee, whilst agreeing that a level of animosity had existed, hoped that the collective discussion at the focus group had helped to ease the situation:

KL-GS: It got quite heated didn't it (laughed). Hopefully the animosity has ceased a little bit.

Induced Empathy

Emerging from the data it appears that the same interviewee in the above quote had found the group discussion important in helping her to gain a sense of empathy towards the complainants:

KL-GS: I think you know it just created more of an awareness of what other people do go through when there are problems. And I think it makes you appreciate you know at a low point they get a bit you know well it got a bit derogatory at one point didn't it. I think it does make you appreciate what other people do go through. Specially more elderly, vulnerable people.

Proxy Agency

RAF

As discussed in Chapter 7 within the data the RAF was criticised for not taking any responsibility for managing neighbourhood problems, particularly in comparison to when the Army was posted locally. This issue was raised again by one resident during the telephone interview:

KL-JH: With the army you could always go to them and they would sort it out but the RAF never seemed to be interested.

She hypothesised that the problem may have been addressed if she had approached the RAF, but justified not doing this because it was difficult to identify who to contact:

KL-JH: Perhaps we should have gone straight to the RAF. We didn't know who to approach, there didn't seem to be anybody.

Although there was nothing in the data to suggest that the RAF had done anything over the summer to ease the problem, the fact that they had now provided contact details seemed to have had a positive impact. The interviewee's perception now was that in the future the RAF would get involved:

KL-JH: Anyway since then somebody who seems to belong in the RAF has given us some telephone numbers, but as I say we haven't needed them since.

Youth Workers

Another hypothesis put forward by a resident for the improvement was that youth workers had perhaps been spreading the message about the booklet project to youth club members.

KL-MJ: I don't know what the youth club did, so whether there was things being said at the youth club that you was going to work on.

At a stage in the focus group the resident featured in the quote above had asked if I would be doing any similar work with the YP. My reply had been that if it was deemed appropriate and youth workers were willing to incorporate the booklet project into some of their activities at the youth club, then I would be exploring this possibility. However, at the time of the telephone interviews I had not made contact with local youth workers.

Safer Neighbourhood Team

Analysis of the data collected from interviewees, particularly previous complainants shows them to have attributed the resolution of problem behaviour by children to increased activity by members of the SNT. Their belief appeared to be based on their interpretation of information they were given or on personal perceptions of what may have occurred. One resident concluded that a member of the SNT had visited one family:

KL-JH: Well, we're in a Neighbourhood Watch and somebody's been to one of the [regional] meetings and you know, they don't actually tell you anything definite but I think that's what they were implying, that they'd gone round to the families and had a word with them.

In the data this interviewee clearly acknowledged that she had no tangible evidence to suggest that the SNT had increased their activity but felt sure that this was in fact the case:

KL-JH: We don't know quite what's happened . You know whether somebody's been round to em or what I don't know. You know there doesn't seem to be anything happening, but I think they were working in the background quite a lot.

She went on to say that she was sure that not only were the SNT talking to the parents but were speaking with the children also:

KL-JH: I think the police have been round to the parents. I think the police have been round and they keep going to talk to the kids and it seems to have worked at last. The CPSO is coming round more to check on it. Try to encourage them to do other things.

Similar to the above quote, another of the elderly residents felt that there had been more activity by the SNT, although again this was based on perceptions rather than direct observations:

KL-MP: But I think other things have gone on since which I maybe don't know about. You know, like the police getting involved.

Interestingly, not only did residents cited above assume that there had been more activity by the SNT, but also the data collected from the newly appointed local Neighbourhood Watch Co-ordinator suggested that he had the same perception and felt this had had an impact on children's behaviour:

KL-NWC: [Name of the PCSO and Policewoman] have been around a lot an all, so I don't know if maybe that's one of the other options, that the kids have thought well if they're around here we may as well go elsewhere.

However, data from a telephone interview and subsequent email exchange with the CPSO who was responsible for patrolling the area confirmed that he had not increased his presence in the area but had continued as normal to include it in his routine patrol whenever on duty. Although his level of activity had not increased, the residents' perceptions that the opposite was the case had given the older residents some sense of reassurance:

KL-JH: The police are you know putting some effort in to try and help us.

There is clearly a mismatch between participants' perceptions of action and that actually taken. Residents were inaccurately perceiving the level of police activity to have increased, but according to the CPSO it had not. Once again, this gives an example of complainants' perceptions being built on assumptions rather than on interaction and communication. Earlier examples of this related to poor interaction between residents; here it relates to a lack of two-way communication between complainants and police.

Researcher

Interestingly, the increased attention within the neighbourhood generated by the Let's Talk research project was also cited within the data as possibly contributing to the improvement experienced. The interviewee in the first quote below surmised that the work I was undertaking may have had an impact; the second interviewee provides a firmer statement in this respect:

KL-MP: Unless you did something in the background.

KL-MJ: I mean I feel you have been a help.

Inexplicable Improvement

Much of the residents' views about the possible cause of the reduced level of football-related problems in the Close were based on perceptions and suppositions rather than clear evidence. For the interviewee quoted below, trying to pinpoint what type of agency had caused the improvement was not important. For her, more important was her perception that there was somebody actively trying to resolve the problem:

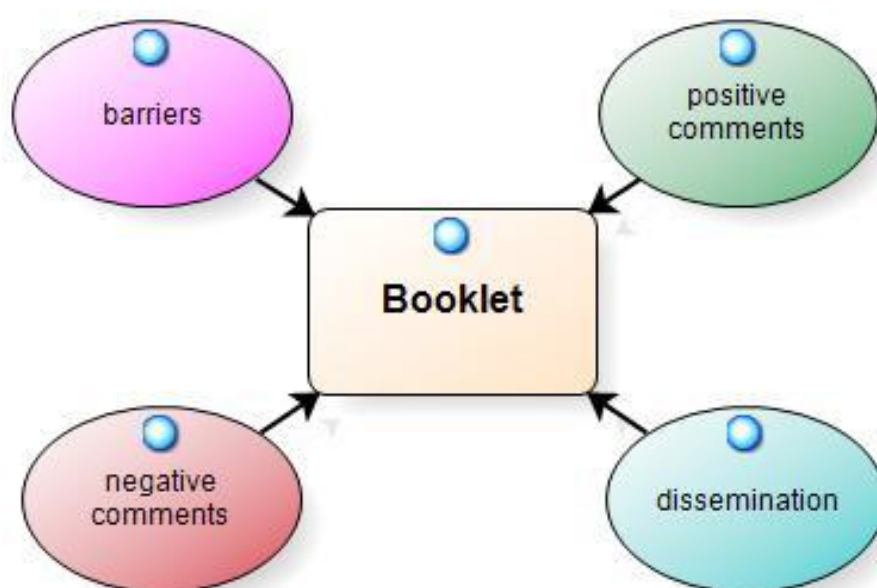
KL-MP: I don't think it's anything we particularly did. I don't know really what has gone on. I'm not sure what has made it so really. I don't know if anything has gone on much in the background you know. But it's good to think that you know somebody. I think, I think it's good to think somebody is involved and trying to do something about it.

Views on the Let's Talk Booklet

During the telephone interviews with residents I also asked for their views on the booklet. The four themes which emerged from the data collected are shown in Figure 8.2 below and are then discussed in turn. The analysis was a useful

exercise in that it not only provided an insight into people's opinions on the booklet's content and utilisation but also highlighted issues which should be considered for its future development.

Figure 8.2: Views on the Let's Talk Booklet



Positive Comments

All seven interviewees told me that they had read through the booklet again subsequent to the focus group and would consider using it in future. In analysing the data it was interesting to find that each interviewee had homed in on certain elements of the booklet. For example, a feature of the booklet was the inclusion of different perspectives of a given situation, which was recognised and positively commented on by one interviewee:

KL-BF: Yeh I did, yeh I did read it. I thought it was good actually. I thought it was a good balance of like the different perspectives and things.

One interviewee had picked up the booklet's aim to encourage communication and friendly intergenerational interaction which she saw as important to resolving neighbourhood problems:

KL-GS: Cos, well it's about communicating isn't it which is important instead of getting angry all the time (laughs).

The interviewee from whom the data below originated was one of the older residents who had been a complainant of children's behaviour. Interestingly, as a result of reading the booklet she had reflected on its recommendations relating to intergenerational interaction and her response to the children in the past. As a result she was suggesting that a different approach, more in line with the booklet's, may have been appropriate:

KL-JH: You did make me think about it quite a bit yes. Maybe we should have been a bit more understanding. I would think about using the booklet. It makes you think in a different way I suppose. It made me think you know perhaps you could have dealt with it slightly different.

A similar comment was forthcoming from an older resident who earlier in the interview had said that she had not experienced any problem with young people in the area. She had also stated that she was comfortable talking to them and would intentionally try to make conversation with them or at least acknowledge them as they walked by. What I found interesting though was her comments on the booklet helping her to think of different ways of controlling potential tensions in intergenerational contact situations:

KL-NS: Oh yes I did yeh. I thought that was quite good, it sort of gave you different ideas on you trying to keep things on a calm basis. Err I thought that was quite good, yeh, yeh I did.

As discussed earlier in the chapter, although the booklet had originally been designed to be used only with adults, data collected was increasingly suggesting that it could also be a useful tool to utilise in work with YP. A comment made by another interviewee, as well as being complimentary, reinforced the idea that this was a factor worthy of more consideration:

KL-GS: I did look at it, I did yes and I thought it was really useful actually. It's for both sides isn't it?

Implicit in the interviewee's comment below is her support for the approach advocated in the booklet.

KL-MJ: I definitely read through it. I always did [what the booklet suggests] even before the booklet even came along.

However, on revisiting some of her earlier comments, I suggest that it is necessary to exercise some caution regarding the positive comment made above, particularly in light of her following comment:

KL-MJ: So I tend to try and just let it go and I just explode every now and again.

In introducing the booklet to the focus group participants I supplemented my accompanying commentary with anecdotal vignettes to reinforce some points in the booklet, as explained in Chapter 6. One such anecdote was told to me by a senior Community Safety Officer based in the North West of England. It related to a group of youths who favoured gathering in a car park, close the entrance of a supermarket. Adult customers frequently complained to the manager about their presence which they claimed was intimidating. For some time the manager took no action because he felt the youths were doing nothing which

warranted their removal. Eventually after continual customer complaints he approached the youths and asked why they chose to 'hang out' there. Their response was that because of the good lighting in the car park, and the sense of protection they felt from being able to see people in the supermarket and in turn the people being able to see them, they considered this to be a safe place to meet with peers. Interestingly, this story had resonated with one of the telephone interviewees, and the data suggested that she may try to view scenarios from a more sympathetic stance in future:

KL-MP: Well that did stick with me and I thought well they are more vulnerable than you think, err you know when you tend to think the little beggars when you know running amok, but yeh they are more vulnerable than you think. I try to be more sympathetic. Yeh, I definitely would bring [the booklet] to mind.

The above comment provides evidence to suggest that implementation of the booklet should be undertaken in situations where the content can be explained and supplemented with supporting commentary.

Dissemination

Two of the interviewees also said that they had shown the booklet to neighbours who had also made positive comments. In particular one interviewee had shown it to the family whose children were said to be at the centre of the behaviour-related issue. Her perception was that they had responded positively to its content, but possible adoption of the booklet approach was tempered by the history of the problem which is discussed later under *Barriers*.

Negative Comments

Encouragingly the data suggests general support for the booklet's content and its recommended approach. Out of the seven telephone interviewees only one had a negative comment on its content, and this brought up the issue of potential unintended misinterpretation of the pictorial scenarios featured in the booklet.

KL-MJ: IF neighbours had had that delivered through the door and the children had picked it up they would think, oh yes Mr 'Smith' said it's fine, you can play ball against my house till half past nine at night. And THAT to me (p) it was giving the children PERMISSION to play against my personal wall on my garden. Well, I don't want somebody playing against my wall. To me that's how the book read to a few of us actually.

This quote raises issues about an adult's interpretation of the booklet's intended message, and also the potential interpretation by any YP who may access a copy. Whilst analysis of the booklet's content and wording is outside the scope of this thesis, the above comments give further weight to the SNT members' view, discussed in Chapter 7, that the control of how and where it is appropriate to implement the booklet should be retained by them. It also gives weight to the view that workshops should be an integrated part of the booklet's implementation.

Barriers

As already stated, the data shows that all seven interviewees would consider putting the booklet into practice should a situation require it. However, two interviewees also raised perceived barriers to its potential use, which were closely connected. The interviewee featured in the quote below, who was a

neighbour to both the older residents who had complained and the young family whose children were blamed for the bad behaviour, had voiced the wish to get relevant residents together to talk through the issue. However, she felt that barriers to this being successful were the length of time the problem had existed and the lack of previous interaction in the past would make it difficult to reach an amicable resolution:

KL-BF: There was too much water under the bridge, but had you, if it had been earlier on when it first started happening and we could have got everybody to sit down together and look at it I think it would have been alright, but it had obviously gone too far to do anything kinda constructive with it.

Once again this re-emphasises the need for the SNT to assess the appropriate implementation of the booklet on a case by case basis. In the scenario detailed above it might be beneficial to carry out some initial work to reduce animosity between parties before introducing the booklet.

Another interviewee who had been a complainant in the past, whilst commenting positively about the booklet, also felt that putting into practice the approach recommended in the booklet was hard because of the length of time the problem had existed:

KL-JH: After four years of aggravation it's hard to put some of it into practice.

Again these comments have implications for future implementation strategies and should be considered alongside the views contained in the data relating to *agency* earlier in this chapter.

Continuation of Project

The final question posed during the telephone interviews with residents related to potentially holding another focus group to work further on implementing the booklet and generating better interaction between neighbours. Six of the seven interviewees initially said that they would be happy to attend; four gave an unqualified 'yes', two said they would attend if enough people were interested. One stated that parents who had not been able to attend the first focus group "would like to come along to a follow up meeting". However, this initial enthusiasm for a further meeting was diluted later in some interviews by doubts as to whether one was necessary or by the possibility that another meeting could potentially reignite previous problems:

KL-BF: I don't know whether that would be worth it or not or whether that would just start things up again. I don't know, I think from my point of view I don't necessarily see that it's worth having another.

Data collected from another interviewee clearly suggests that the problems previously experienced relating to boys playing football near her home had abated to an acceptable level and therefore deemed further action unnecessary.

KL-MJ: My personal view is (short laugh) it's gone quiet, let's leave well alone. I think we should leave well alone that it's gone quiet. Let sleeping dogs lie; I'm speaking on a personal basis and I think let sleeping dogs lie.

Summary

In the three months that had elapsed since the focus group a reduction in the football-related problem reported earlier had occurred and the improvement had been sustained. No tangible evidence could be drawn on by the complainants

to explain the reason for the improvement. Rather assumptions were made that this had resulted from a combination of actions by a neighbour, members of the SNT, the activity associated with the research I had undertaken in the area, and to a lesser extent work by youth workers. Within these assumptions agency is represented at all levels – personal, collective and proxy. In terms of personal agency, data confirmed that the neighbour had talked to the parents of the children concerned and it appears that the children were now going to the recreation ground to play football, although there was no firm supporting evidence to prove this. The complainants' perceptions were that members of the SNT (proxy agency) had increased their surveillance in the area and had been more proactive in deterring the children from playing football in the area of the T-junction.

However, the local CPSO stated that he had not increased his attention in the area but had continued his normal routine of including the area as part of his patrol when on duty. Participants' views that my research based activities might have contributed to the improvement were surprising but at the same time gratifying. It was surprising because apart from their direct involvement in completing the questionnaire and attending the focus group any other activity they assumed had taken place was based on assumptions only. However, it is important not to trivialise the positive impact of the focus group (collective agency). Data discussed earlier demonstrated that the focus group provided the opportunity for residents to raise awareness of their concerns, which had then been disseminated more widely. For some residents, collectively discussing the issue had also generated a sense of empathy for how the older

residents felt. This reflected discussion in Chapters 3 and 7 about the preconditions for successful collective efficacy.

Given the participants' support for the booklet and the view that the research had contributed to the improvement, it was surprising that they did not favour continuing with the project and building on the success achieved. I had hoped that because people had enjoyed and recognised the value of communicating with other residents they would want to enhance this further to create a more cohesive neighbourhood. The next chapter includes discussion of why this was not the case.

Chapter 9

Discussion of Findings

The catalyst for my research was the view held by the Borough Council in Location E and WW that there was a need for a policy response to youth-related ASB that focused on two issues. The first was adult's negative perceptions of YP's behaviour; the type of behaviour that the BC felt at worst was low level ASB but for which formal intervention was not deemed necessary. The second issue was adults' reluctance to personally engage with young people to negotiate a resolution, preferring to rely on formal control. The piloting of the Let's Talk Booklet suggests that indirect contact via methods such as a self-help booklet may be an appropriate way to tackle these issues.

A substantial body of research supports the claim that direct contact can bring about the desired results. However, direct contact can be difficult to effect or can have a negative outcome in cases where strong negative perceptions of an outgroup exist. Based on this, indirect models of contact are being developed as explained in Chapter 3. The literature discussed in Chapter 2 and anecdotal evidence based on my personal experience outlined in Chapter 1 give validity to the assumption that adults who have negative perceptions of YP may be reluctant to have direct contact with them. Therefore the booklet draws on the indirect contact model known as the imagined intergroup contact model (IIC) by including simulated intergenerational encounters. As explained in Chapter 3, much of the research of IIC has been within a quasi-experimental setting. The piloting of the booklet in Location KL will contribute to the existing knowledge,

located as it is in a natural setting which provides important context to the findings. Also to my knowledge a tool like the Let's Talk booklet has not been used before to provide simulated information. My researched conclusion is that research participants have been asked to imagine a specific scenario without being given any visual aids.

To provide validity for this assertion, in this chapter I will consider the main findings of this research in the context of the principal areas covered in the literature review of Chapters 2 and 3; social construction of teenagers and in particular their ASB as perceived by adults, and the associated concept of 'teenagers hanging around', its governance, and Intergenerational Practice. My discussion of findings also informs the review of strengths and limitations of this pilot study which figures later in this chapter.

Discussion of Overall Findings

I have analysed findings under four headings, beginning with the construction of youth-related ASB which relates primarily to context and is relatively brief. I then move on to review intergenerational tensions against the leading theories I have identified, before addressing governance of ASB. The fourth section covers the learnings derived from piloting the "Let's Talk" booklet.

Construction of Youth-Related ASB

The data on the nature of THA, discussed in Chapter 5, was collected to gain an understanding of what residents conceptualised as ASB, and to provide context within which the booklet was to be piloted. The findings clearly demonstrated that there was a divergence of views among research

participants as to what was considered ASB and to what extent it was interpreted as serious. This is borne out, for example, by the different interpretations given to the property damage referred to in Locations E and WC. In Location E, damage that occurred following a village event was deemed to be “silly”, whereas the damage outside the leisure centre in Location WC was interpreted in a much more serious way. Similarly, whilst football was mentioned in three of the four research sites, it was only in one that it was constructed as a serious problem. Squires (2008) argues that ASB is, amongst other things, “emphatically about perceptions” (p.368). A prime example of how subjective individuals’ interpretations of behaviour can be is evident in data collected in Locations KL and WC. In the former, the football-related damage to gardens was described by residents who were keen gardeners as “horrendous” and resulted in frequent complaints to the Safer Neighbourhood Team. In contrast a resident in Location WC, who had repeatedly experienced graffiti being sprayed on the side of her house, appeared to view this as less serious; describing it as low level.

Squires (2008) also identifies inter-personal relationships and interaction as factors which might influence individuals’ interpretations of what is or is not deemed anti-social. Findings in Chapter 5 support this statement. For example, whereas focus group participants in Location WW viewed egging as a problem, in Location E it was explained as “youngsters just having a bit of fun”. In the related discussion, the perceived animosity shown towards the young perpetrators by the targeted individual appeared to negate the behaviour being viewed by the research participants as anti-social.

Atkinson and Flint (2004) and Flint, et al. (2007) state that even within a small geographical area residents' views on what constitutes ASB can significantly vary. This was demonstrated to be the case in Location KL; from the perspective of one of the younger focus group participants the children playing football outside her house in The Close was not a problem. However, for older residents living in the same proximity the activity was perceived as a significant annoyance and identified as anti-social behaviour.

My findings resonate with the literature referred to above, which provides a level of robustness to the micro level study in which the booklet pilot is situated. They also support my first subsidiary proposition by showing that different factors are involved in influencing residents' perceptions of ASB, including local context and individuals' characteristics which specifically figure in the proposition. However I did not identify government policy as an influence in this pilot study. This diverges from my first subsidiary proposition to the extent that, responding to the views expressed by BC personnel and to the literature reviewed in Chapter 2, it includes government policy as a factor influencing perceptions of ASB. However, further exploration of this factor would be needed for any conclusions to be drawn.

The literature reviewed in Chapter 2 argues that the media plays a significant role in promoting negative stereotypes of YP. However, although the subject arose in my research data there was no prolonged discussion by the research participants, hence it did not emerge as a key influencer of perceptions.

My findings identified types of behaviour which cause community tensions characterised by the BC and the SNT team as better dealt with at an informal level. This represents a precondition for pursuing the further development and future implementation of the booklet.

Having established a variety of insights into what different residents regarded as ASB, I went on to analyse in greater detail the dynamics of the situations in the two locations experiencing the greatest problems with perceived ASB, namely Locations KL and WC. As demonstrated in Chapter 5, the majority of residents in Locations E and WW did not perceive there to be a current problem with YP-related ASB.

Intergenerational Tensions – a Theoretical Framework

As stated in Chapter 3, at the commencement of my research, Intergenerational Practice was increasingly being promoted as an approach to improving relations between YP and adults. To contribute to addressing the current dearth of research on IP, the Let's Talk booklet was developed within the IP framework. Drawing on my literature review I identified three theories which are significant in explaining the triggers for intergenerational tensions - realistic intergroup conflict theory (RICT), social identity theory (SIT), and deficit of intergenerational contact theory (DICT). The analysis of my findings shows that each of the three theories goes some way towards explaining the causation of intergenerational tensions to an extent. For example, conflicting interests in the use of public space is given as a reason for intergenerational tensions in the RICT. There is evidence that some adults' negative perceptions were based on their disapproval of specific outdoor spaces being used by YP in Locations KL

and WC. In the case of the former, the problem was the use of space within The Close to play football. In Location WC, groups sitting in the entrance of the local supermarket, youths' presence in the shopping mall playing football, or at a road junction where they played 'flip the coin' were contentious issues. The SIT also goes some way to providing a theoretical explanation for tensions. As explained in Chapter 3, SIT cites negative stereotyping as a cause of intergenerational bias. As shown by the findings in Chapter 5, in all four locations, adults stereotyped YP as having lower moral values and less respect than they themselves did in their day. The findings also revealed that, in some cases, there was an iterative relationship between adults having little contact with YP, holding negative perceptions, and purposely avoiding direct contact with them. This resonates with the DICT which explains that tensions exist and are then reinforced and perpetuated because of the lack of intergenerational interaction.

Whilst these theories provide partial explanations, their use leads to the various causation factors being compartmentalised, which does not reflect the complexity of the problems or the conjuncture of various social dynamics and tensions which came to light, particularly in Location KL. In contrast, as is demonstrated below, Integrated Threat Theory (ITT) provides a more comprehensive theoretical framework within which a detailed discussion of my research findings can be undertaken.

Although ITT draws on RICT, the former incorporates a wider range of threats to "the welfare of the group or its members" than the RICT which focuses on "competition for scarce resources" (Stephan and Renfro, 2002, p.192-3). As

stated in Chapter 3, in ITT a distinction is made between realistic and symbolic threat, and in both cases threats can be real or perceived and can be at individual or group level. These distinctions help to conceptualise the tensions resulting from the ASB-related problem described in Location WC. Data outlined in Chapter 5 demonstrates that there was a perceived realistic individual threat relating to the presence of groups drinking alcohol in the entrance to the local supermarket. I characterise this as a perceived rather than real threat as none of the focus group participants reported actually suffering any physical or material harm. It was the drinkers' visible presence which was unnerving to residents; as far as can be ascertained no direct contact was experienced. Similarly, one participant's reluctance to use the previously vandalised leisure centre was based on his perception that, as an individual, there was the possibility of suffering physical harm, although data suggests none had been suffered previously. Whilst it is important to acknowledge that the last participant's perceptions of threat may have been influenced by the vandalism he suffered to his car as described in Chapter 5, it is outside the scope of this research to establish the relevance of this separate event. In Location WC, whilst the data collected provided a useful insight into the nature of the youth-related ASB experienced and its resultant impact, insufficient data relating to community dynamics was forthcoming. This limits the discussion of these particular findings against the literature on the ITT. In contrast however, the richer data collected in Location KL demonstrates the complexity of the problem in The Close. It is here that the ITT becomes particularly useful and informs a detailed, ordered discussion of the findings.

In Location KL, whilst many residents were not affected, a realistic individual threat existed in relation to YP's use of public space for playing football outside older resident's homes in The Close. Some of the problems identified by these older residents were real, such as damage to gardens associated with children running uninvited onto residents' private property. However, in terms of the associated noise, whether or not this is defined as a problem is dependent on an individual's perspective. For example, older residents perceived this as a real problem whereas the younger mother did not. In fact, one of the factors that drew her to buying a house in The Close was the presence of children playing.

The antecedents of threat according to the ITT were discussed in Chapter 3. The **first domain** of antecedents, **prevailing intergroup relations**, was identified as a potential cause of tensions. This was the case in Location KL, where the unwelcome use of the immediate area close to the complainants' homes as a play area by children had a history of around four years. Data suggested that this factor exacerbated the tensions between the different residents, and added to the perceived realistic individual threat felt by the complainants.

In addition to the above, there were individual predictors listed within the **second domain** of antecedents of threat - **individual difference variables** - that were evident in the data and explained the development of the interpersonal tensions, particularly in Location KL. The first of these predictors which were explained in Chapter 3 was *strong social identification* on the part of the complainants. Prior to collecting data I had assumed that any interpersonal

or intergroup tension would be based on intergenerational issues directly related to adults' perceptions of THA. However, an unexpected social dynamic was the strong social identification the complainants had based on their attachment in the past to the Army. Associated with this was their affinity with the perceived high standards of conduct and values embraced by the Army and expected of its serving personnel in both professional and personal spheres. These standards and values were felt by the complainants to be superior to those of the RAF and its personnel who now occupy the service homes once occupied by the Army, and was felt to be reflected in the day to day life in The Close.

In relation to the problems in The Close, it appears that the negative situation has in part been perpetuated by the interplay between the complainants' strong social identification with the Army and the related negative stereotyping of the young families because of their connection to the RAF. However, my deeper analysis of the situation in Location KL demonstrates that it is more complex than is reflected in the discussion above, as is evident by considering some of the other characteristics contained in the typology of antecedents developed by Stephen and Renfro (2002) and which overlap with predictors relevant in the Realistic Intergroup Conflict Theory, referred to in Chapter 3.

The second predictor within this domain of antecedents is a *social dominance* characteristic. As well as the complainants in Location KL being unhappy about the frequency and duration of the disapproved behaviour, they believed strongly that The Close was not a suitable place for children to play football, and that children should use the football ground. Despite concerns for the children's

safety being given by a parent as the reason for not allowing children to go to the football field, the complainants stuck firmly to their belief that the activity should stop. Throughout they were unwavering in their belief that their views on, and suggested resolution to, the problem should take priority. Therefore, the complainants viewed the parents' non-compliance with their wishes as a challenge to their social position which resulted in tension between the different parties. According to the ITT, an individual who leans towards a social dominance orientation believes in a hierarchical order and feels that their views and beliefs should take precedence over others'. Consequently, any situation which challenges a perceived hierarchical position is likely to induce tension.

Authoritarianism is the third predictor of intergroup threat and prejudice and is positively associated with social dominance orientation. Authoritarians believe that deference should be shown to authority, and linked with this is the notion that obedience and respect should be shown to one's superiors (McFarland, 2003; Pettigrew, 2008b).

Whilst further research would be needed to test out the extent to which these factors act as mediators, the evidence pointed towards the complainants' negative interpretation of the situation in Location KL being substantially due to the interplay between social dominance orientation, a leaning towards authoritarianism, and a lack of contact with both the children and their parents as discussed earlier.

In Location KL negative or lack of positive contact between the different parties, and as a consequence the poor cognition of the outgroup were all evident as

predictors of tension. These factors resonate with the **second domain** identified within the ITT, **individual differences**, and the related antecedent of 'lack of contact'. Throughout the course of the focus group in Location KL it became clear that there had been no previous personal interaction between the complainants and any of the younger RAF families. Even in the case of the complainants and the young mother who had been immediate neighbours for the last four years, the focus group was the first time they had come into direct contact. Pettigrew (2008b) argues that lack of intergroup contact "triggers a series of interlocking processes that inflame group conflict. Negative stereotypes are magnified; distrust cumulates; and awkwardness typifies the limited intergroup interaction that does take place" (p.122).

Given Pettigrew's (2008b) argument above, and the lack of direct contact the complainants had with the other families, it is fair to assume that the former had little or no knowledge of the young families. It appeared that the only knowledge they had was based on observing them in The Close and the fact that they were RAF families which, as discussed earlier, had negative connotations for the complainants.

Data collected from Locations E and WW support the theoretical argument of the Intergroup Contact Theory and the ITT that knowing members of the outgroup encountered can prevent the interpretation that outgroup members might pose a threat to ingroup members. Conversely, this gives weight to the notion that lack of knowledge of the outgroup is likely to act as a predictor of intergroup or interpersonal tension. The focus group in Location KL had given

the opportunity for different members of The Close to interact and learn more about one another. Interestingly the improved relations between the different groups at this focus group were palpable at the end of the event compared with the beginning. On arrival at the focus group I had observed no interaction between the older residents and other attendees. When leaving the two groupings were friendlier towards each other and left the building in mixed groups in which appreciation of having the opportunity to interact was voiced. Mackenzie, et al. (2010) argue that a small amount of contact can generate empathy and mutual respect. ITT argues that it is the quality of contact rather than the quantity which has the biggest impact (Stephan and Renfro, 2002).

The ITT also highlights **situational factors** as a **fourth domain** of antecedents to threat, such as the *setting* within which an activity takes place, and the *size of the outgroup* compared with the ingroup. Based on the data detailed in Chapter 6 that covers participants' willingness or reluctance to interact with YP, the assumption that situational factors are important predictors is valid. For example, in Locations E and WW, the size of the group of YP encountered was an important predictor; the more there were the greater the perceived threat which in turn deterred interaction. The *time of day* was cited as an issue with perceived individual threat being heightened in the evenings. Similarly, the research participants in the Locations E and WW said the setting of the interaction was important; they were more comfortable when they met YP in their own village as opposed to encounters in the nearby town. The *nature of the interaction* is also identified as potentially impacting on one's sense of threat. Particularly in the case of Location WC, the confrontational interaction one participant experienced between himself and a young boy and later the

boy's parent heightened his perceived individual threat. Likewise the confrontation the female participant had with a group of youths on a bus induced a perceived individual threat that was possibly aggravated because she was unaccompanied which instilled in her a greater sense of vulnerability. During the focus group in Location KL, the participants themselves agreed that relatively speaking they lived in a crime free area, which perhaps means that low level ASB takes on a higher profile when it occurs. In contrast, according to the official data in Appendix 6, Location WC is a less affluent area and suffers higher crime rates. Focus group participants talked of drug and alcohol related problems and also described several instances where relatively serious criminal damage to cars and property had occurred. In comparison to these incidents, graffiti was construed as a less serious issue. This example gives weight to Millie's (2009) view that "norms and values vary between different individuals or communities" (p.16), and therefore context is important. It also reflects the findings of the BCS, that is, perceptions of youth-related ASB being a very/fairly big problem are more prevalent in poor areas; a factor raised in Chapter 2. The discussion here supports the need for consideration of the wider context to explain the different interpretations of the severity of behaviour and, as a consequence, adults' perceptions of YP. It also supports my first proposition regarding the variety of factors influencing perceptions of ASB. The above findings also resonate with Stephan's and Renfro's (2002) claim that threats, rather than "being static in nature", can be "highly dynamic, changing across situations and over time" (p.202). They go on to say that "the types of groups that are interacting in a given situation will influence which types of threats become more salient" (p.202).

In Chapter 3 I drew attention to Stephan and Renfro's (2002) proposition that there was a cyclical process involving the consequences of threat and the psychological and behavioural responses. This supports my conclusion that a cyclical process, or multi-directional interaction, has occurred between the antecedents referred in the paragraphs above and the perceived threats felt by the complainants in Location KL. Although no one predictor can be identified as the prime variable that triggered the interaction, the findings give weight to the suggestion that these antecedents have helped to fuel the ongoing tensions between affected parties.

In considering threat the ITT recognises that both psychological and behavioural reactions can occur as a consequence of intergenerational threat. It also identifies four forms intergroup relations can take - ingroup-outgroup, ingroup-outgroup individual, ingroup individual-outgroup, ingroup individual-outgroup individual. Whichever one of these forms is most salient in a situation can influence one's psychological reactions (emotional and cognitive) and behavioural reactions. The data from the four locations detailed in Chapter 5 clearly demonstrates that individuals experienced emotional reactions to perceived or real youth-related ASB. They described anxiety inducing feelings, for example, of fear, annoyance, anger, and intimidation. It appears though that, in general, these reactions were not outwardly directed at the YP because overall the adults' behavioural response involved avoiding direct interaction. In some cases, this involved avoiding certain areas specifically or taking avoidance action such as crossing the road. These tactics suggest that the threat, either by multiple members of the outgroup or by individual members, was interpreted as being at individual level rather than ingroup level. However,

the data which was collected to gain an insight into intergenerational relations more generally suggests that in the reaction to experiencing young people in public places the individual-group relation was more salient. In other words, the adults' perceptions were that they as individuals were at threat from teenagers as an outgroup. As stated above, a negative situation can also lead to cognitive reactions, for example stronger negative stereotyping, but to establish to what extent this occurred in the Locations referred to in this thesis further in-depth research would be needed with individual participants.

Location KL had been identified for me by the SNT as an appropriate site to pilot the booklet because of ongoing intergenerational tension in relation to children playing football in a residential area. The assumption was made that the channel of tension ran between older residents and the children. Through the focus group and subsequent telephone interviews I learnt that the situation was more complex than first thought. Data collected, and discussed in Chapter 7 and 8, and highlighted earlier in this chapter, revealed the multi-generational tensions existing which included not only older residents and children, but also the parents of the children. Additionally, however, there was also an undercurrent of intergroup tension between some ex-army and current RAF residents. These tensions, particularly evident between the complainants and their immediate neighbours with young children, seemed to manifest themselves in lack of contact between the parties. Despite being neighbours for around four years, the focus group was the first time that the complainants had had any direct contact with the young mother. These findings resonate with literature in Chapter 2 which states that ASB-related problems can be situated within a complex interplay between different social dynamics. The findings

indicate that it is important to take due regard of this issue in intergenerational practice, and to avoid adopting a tunnel vision approach in which only intergenerational issues are considered.

My research has demonstrated the complexity of the issues associated with perceptions of ASB because of the interplay between different factors. ITT has provided a valuable framework in which to position my discussion of the tensions associated with adults' complaints of youth-related ASB. However, my research demonstrates that a limitation of the ITT framework is that it focuses on threat being bilateral between two groups, an ingroup and outgroup. It does not acknowledge or make allowances for the fact that, in some situations, additional groups may be involved. An important additional dynamic in Location KL, and to a lesser extent in Location WC, was that the children were not the only group identified as an outgroup but so too were the parents of the children. Literature on intergenerational practice advances the argument that future developments should be at multi- as well as inter- generational level (Moore and Statham, 2009; Springate, Atkinson and Martin, 2008). For ITT to constitute a rich resource capable of going beyond intergenerational practice, a model that takes account of multi-generational issues needs to be developed.

As explained in Chapter 3, research carried out so far aimed at developing ITT has been within the context of immigration (Bizman and Yinon, 2001; Curşeu, Stoop and Schalk, 2007; Ward and Masgoret, 2006), sectarian conflict (Tausch, et al., 2007), religion (González, Verkuyten, Weesie and Poppe, 2008) and racial relations (Stephan, et al., 2002). My discussion in this section shows that

there is justification for also continuing its development within the context of intergenerational tensions.

Further consideration of the theoretical and practical implications of the above discussion will be undertaken in Chapter 10. My key findings here relate to my second proposition namely: Theories associated with intergenerational practice can be used to explain some of the issues associated with low-level ASB. I identified evidence to support the RICT (use of outdoor space) and SIT (negative stereotyping). However ITT emerged as by far the most relevant theoretical framework, with evidence including prevailing intergroup relations, individual difference variables (strong social identification, social dominance orientation and authoritarianism), lack of contact and ingroup/outgroup issues, situational factors (setting of the interaction, time of day, nature of the interaction), and both psychological and behavioural reactions. This pilot study has shown how the ITT can be used to examine in detail the complexity of the issues involved and the interrelationship of various factors, such as in Location KL the interplay between social dominance orientation, a leaning towards authoritarianism, and a lack of contact with both the children and their parents. This analysis also demonstrates that too narrow an interpretation, focusing overly on “intergenerational”, is inadequate. Since ITT is not generally classified as ‘associated with intergenerational practice’, my second proposition requires reconsideration.

This section also adds more support to the first subsidiary proposition, by demonstrating the differences in perceptions between different locations.

In the next section of this chapter my focus turns to the concept of governance and the research participants' views on the role of personal, collective and proxy agency in relation to tackling ASB in general, and more specifically via the use of the Let's Talk booklet.

Governance of Anti-Social Behaviour

As explained in the Introductory Chapter, at the outset of my research Local Authority personnel were of the view that adult residents were reluctant personally to deal with low level youth-related ASB. Consequently, it was felt that they overly relied inappropriately on formal agencies to deal with the problem. This links to a theme which emerged from my literature review, namely responsibilisation, including the community playing a greater role in resolving social issues. My findings however demonstrate that full account also needs to be taken of governance issues, in particular questions of agency. The SCT provided the most suitable theoretical framework for analysing governance and agency.

As well as encouraging residents to look at YP's behaviour from a different perspective which in turn it is hoped will improve the formers' perceptions of the latter, the booklet aims to encourage residents to take an active role in governance of ASB. As is evident in Chapter 3, literature has been identified which provides definitions of governance generally (for example, Steden, Caem and Boutellier, 2011 provide a useful review of the conceptualisation of governance), or more specifically Garland (1996) considers governance in relation to community safety. In addition, research has been carried out which

seeks to identify and evaluate different models of governance relevant to community safety (Terpstra, 2009).

Related to governance is Garland's concept of responsibilisation discussed in Chapter 3. Hinds and Grabosky (2010) and Prior, Farrow, Spalek, and Barnes, (2006) respectively have published Australian based and England based research which provides valuable insights into factors that can influence people's willingness to take responsibility for the governance of crime. Whilst Hinds' and Grabosky's (2010) study focused on people's sense of personal responsibility for reducing the potential risk of crime victimisation, some of the predictors identified resonate with my work. My findings relating to governance, discussed below, add to knowledge gained from both of the above pieces of research in two ways. Firstly, by drawing on a social psychological perspective and utilising Bandura's Social Cognitive Theory framework, which to my knowledge has not been used in relation to governance previously, I have gained a deeper, granular understanding of individuals' views on the role of different levels of agency and their feelings about exercising personal agency. This is knowledge which is relevant within the wider context of community safety policy. Secondly, my research provides an insight into how the LAs conceptualise governance specifically in relation to different levels of agency. My literature review identified a dearth of research in this area.

Residents' Views on Governance of ASB

The findings outlined in Chapter 7, particularly in relation to Locations KL and WC, demonstrated that residents favoured formal channels of control (proxy agency) over informal channels (personal agency). The literature reviewed in

Chapter 3 argues that residents' willingness to exercise personal agency to tackle youth-related ASB is mediated by various factors. Later in Chapter 7 I highlighted Bandura's (2001) argument, in relation to the SCT, that agency is affected by the interplay between personal and environmental factors; "internal personal factors in the form of cognitive, affective and biological events, behaviour patterns, and environmental influences all operate as interacting determinants that influence one another bidirectionally" (Bandura, 2001, p.14-5).

Specific to crime control, Hind and Grabosky (2010) argue that context and individual factors influence individuals' willingness to take some responsibility for crime control. They go on to state that "An interplay of structural or community level and individual-level factors inhibits or facilitates peoples crime control activities" (p.99). My research findings reinforce this argument as demonstrated in the discussion of individuals' views on agency that follows.

By definition, personal agency within the context of my research requires direct interpersonal/intergroup interaction, but discussion in the previous section of this chapter highlighted some adults' anxiety towards doing so. For one research participant the fear of reprisal and the anxiety generated by a negative encounter with a parent had deterred him from considering being involved in informal control in the future. As explained earlier, the emotional reaction of anxiety or uncertainty can induce or exacerbate intergroup tension. The SCT highlights that the presence of anxiety can negatively affect one's sense of self-efficacy which in turn is likely to result in individuals' reluctance to favour personal agency.

Somerville (2011) advances the argument that only where people feel a strong sense of individual responsibility or duty to act will personal agency be activated. An example of this belief coming into play was the incident on the bus where a research participant in Location WC had intervened. However, due to experiencing the unpleasant reaction by the youths she felt this would deter her from intervening in future. It was quite obvious from the tone in which the other members of the focus group in Location WC spoke that they would not feel a sense of responsibility to intervene, and that it was very much the role of the police or LAs. Indeed, a preference was shown for punitive, formal sanctions to be implemented aimed at parents, such as fines.

The SCT explains that if individuals focus on negative experiences and/or believe that they lack the ability to deal with a situation then self-efficacy will be low. For the participant who had the encounter with a group of youths on a bus journey, this was certainly the case. During the focus group she returned several times to reinforce how disturbing the experience had been and how ineffective she felt she had been in dealing with the situation. Clearly this had adversely affected her sense of self-efficacy and had deterred her from taking any responsibility for informal control in the future.

Flint (2008) argues that social dynamics and the complexity of neighbourhood relations can have a negative effect on people's preparedness to undertake personal agency. I consider that a significant number of the antecedents to threat associated with the ITT discussed in the first section of this chapter might also deter personal agency on the part of adults. For example, if a lack of knowledge of the outgroup is predicted to generate a feeling of threat/anxiety in

a member of the ingroup, it is likely that it will also deter the latter getting involved in informal control. Somerville (2011) supports this assumption by making the point that not being acquainted with the person one believes to be causing ASB is likely to deter the individual ingroup member from acting personally. Prior, Farrow, Spalek, and Barnes (2006) specifically identified a 'generational gap' and the associated differences in values as negatively impacting on the willingness of the older residents to exercise personal agency. Related to this is Harris's (2006) claim that divergent norms and values within a neighbourhood are significant. Particularly in Location KL the older residents were not well acquainted with the younger parents or their children, nor did the different generations share views on the appropriateness of children playing football in The Close. I suggest that the interplay of these factors, mirroring the interplay between behaviour, personal and environmental factors in the SCT, serves to diminish the older residents' sense of self-efficacy which results in their reluctance to view personal agency as appropriate. This conclusion is given weight by the work of Mackenzie, et al. (2010), Atkinson and Flint (2004), Gilchrist (2009); Flint (2002), Harris (2006), Hinds and Grabosky (2010) and Skinns (2007) who convincingly argue that informal control is unlikely to occur in fragmented neighbourhoods where there is a lack of connectedness between residents.

The complainants in Location KL, with frequent reference to making complaints to the SNT and expressing the view that formal control should be enforced, gave no indication that they would be happy to deal with the perceived problems. Earlier in this chapter a belief in authoritarianism was discussed as a predictor of the complainants' negative attitudes towards the children playing

football and their parents. Other traits of authoritarians is that they believe crime should be punished more harshly, and they show animosity towards the outgroup (McFarland, 2003; Pettigrew, 2008b). Both of these factors were evident in the data detailed in Chapter 5 and therefore could help to explain why the complainants in Location KL and WC expect the perceived problems to be dealt with via proxy rather than personal agency.

Interestingly, in both Locations E and WW research participants showed a greater willingness to implement personal agency or be involved in collective agency than was the case in Locations WC and KL. A significant difference between these two groups of participants was that in Locations WC and KL the youth-related problems described were, on the whole, either more severe (Location WC) or perceived as being more serious (Location KL), and therefore the responsibility of formal agencies. In Location E, a mediator which may also have influenced participants' willingness to exercise informal control was the fact that they knew or were acquainted with most of the YP in the village, expressed less animosity towards them, and felt comfortable interacting with them. Even though participants of the focus groups in Locations E and WW had either witnessed or were aware of negative behaviour by YP, they tended to view this in a less serious way.

However, although participants in Location E expressed willingness to utilise informal control this was tempered by their belief that their self and collective efficacy would be hampered because of official bureaucracy. Therefore, in line with the other locations, they also advocated proxy agency. In all locations there was the view that resolution of youth-related ASB should involve formal

social control, be it through the SNT in the form of heightened presence in local areas or providing parenting classes, or schools taking a stronger role.

Interestingly, in both Location WC and KL those participants who claimed to have directly experienced or witnessed youth-related ASB strongly advocated proxy agency. My reading of Location WC was that generally the severity of the behaviour perceived by the research participants, as described in Chapter 5, also contributed to residents not wanting to intervene personally.

Having analysed the attitudes of local residents towards the issue of agency in relation to governance, I now turn to the views of the participants of the Let's Talk booklet workshops and the LAs involved.

Workshop Participants' and SNT's Views

In the previous section, the discussion undertaken was based on residents' views on governance and the different forms of agency appropriate for dealing with THA without them having any knowledge of the booklet. In contrast, the views of workshop participants and the SNT were given subsequent to seeing the booklet, and were specifically linked to the potential implementation strategy.

At the outset of my research, as a result of discussions with LA personnel, I had some preconceived ideas of how the booklet could be used. Integral to the overall plan was the notion that it would be cascaded down to residents at grassroots level through short training workshops. Local community representatives, such as Parish Councillors and Neighbourhood Watch Co-ordinators, would be trained to lead the booklet workshops in the first instance.

Subsequently, having undertaken the training, willing members of the community would also lead booklet workshops; therefore enabling a 'snowball' strategy of implementation. Ultimately, the aim was that local adult residents would either take a different perspective on THA and therefore feel less of a need for intervention, or feel competent to deal with low level ASB in a constructive way personally. The rationale for this style of implementation was that it would hopefully reduce the reliance of individuals on formal control at the level of SNTs; as stated earlier, this was a significant driver in the original development of the booklet. This strategy was tabled at the workshops at the developmental stage of the booklet and generally met with approval, as the findings in Chapter 7 reflect.

However, from the point at which I started working in Locations KL and WC my views on the booklet's implementation were not conveyed to the local SNT with the exception of one point. That point was that the distribution should not be via a letterbox drop; my reason for this was that I wanted to minimise as much as possible the risk of an individual misinterpreting the booklet content in a way that could exacerbate an already volatile situation. Ethically, I considered this was an important consideration. Also, the reason for withholding my detailed views was that I did not want to impose them on the development of an implementation strategy. Secondly, given their close relationship with the areas they served and their wealth of experience, I felt the SNT was better placed to make decisions on implementation.

Interestingly, the members of the SNT representing Locations KL and WC shared the view that the implementation strategy should involve both residents

and community organisations. They liked the idea of the 'burden being shared'. They believed that a role of formal agents was to improve residents' self-efficacy which in turn could encourage personal and collective agency. As already discussed, the SCT categorises agency as proxy, collective and personal, and in my coding of the data I have used these to describe the levels of agency identified by the SNT as appropriate for the booklet's implementation. Proxy agency includes professionals such as Housing Associations, Youth Workers, Connexions advisors, Neighbourhood Action Teams and Local Partnerships. Collective agency encompasses organisations such as Neighbourhood Watch Schemes, Community Centres, Church, Community Ambassadors, and Residents' Groups. Personal agency, linked to individuals taking personal responsibility, was also mentioned, but this was in relation to some SNT members' frustration that this was insufficiently exercised.

What was most striking about the SNT's discussion of the suggested implementation strategy was their belief that the SNT should maintain overall control. They saw it as their role to determine when and where the booklet should be used. As one SNT member stated "We're not going to issue the books until they come to us to say this is the issue and we're going to use Let's Talk. And we'll say, yeh that's appropriate". In effect the way in which the SNT utilised their proxy agency status was to seek to influence the model of agency applicable to individual situations. This view contrasted significantly with that of the Location Authority serving Locations E and WW. As stated earlier, the latter envisaged the booklet being implemented in a way which reduced its involvement in tackling low level ASB, and relinquishing responsibility to other community organisations.

A further significant divergence of views on implementation was the level of ASB at which the booklet might be utilised. The Workshop attendees expressed strong views that the booklet's implementation should be restricted to tackling low level behaviour. In contrast, the SNT believed its application could usefully be used for more serious cases of ASB, and with different groups (for example, parents groups, and schools).

These findings, particularly in Locations KL and WC, reinforce the views expressed by LA personnel at the start of the research; that is, they felt that local residents favoured proxy agency rather than personal agency. However, the findings of this research have provided a more in depth analysis of why these views exist, and will be valuable in considering future development and deployment of the booklet, as discussed in Chapter 10.

Discussion of residents' views goes to reinforce my first subsidiary proposition, influences on perceptions of ASB. An interesting issue is that in a number of cases the factors which influence people's perceptions of ASB are identified as also having an effect on their views on agency, which in turn are linked to their level of self-efficacy. The Integrated Threat Theory again provides a valuable theoretical framework in that I judged that a number of the antecedents to threat identified and discussed earlier in this chapter are also relevant to self-efficacy. This again calls for review of my second subsidiary proposition relating to the use of theories associated with intergenerational practice.

Regarding my third subsidiary proposition, use of the booklet to influence perceptions of and help deal with ASB, both the BC (Locations E and WW) and

the SNT (Locations WC and KL) considered that it would be effective. In practical terms that was clearly essential in order to win their support, but their professional opinions, whilst encouraging, could not of course guarantee the booklet's effectiveness. It is to the piloting of the booklet's implementation stage and use in the field that I now turn.

Let's Talk Booklet – Pilot Implementation

My third subsidiary research proposition is that a booklet can be an effective medium for (a) influencing adults' perceptions of youth-related activity, and (b) assisting individuals and communities to deal with ASB. The intergroup contact theory (ICT) encompasses the notion that through contact, the ingroup's better knowledge of the outgroup can reduce negative perceptions. The ICT also proposes that by increasing positive contact of groups or individuals, existing tensions and anxieties can be reduced. However in some cases direct contact is inappropriate because of the circumstances and history of the situation. In such cases the Imagine Intergroup Contact model may facilitate a better starting point, since it seeks to address anxieties in an environment that participants find less uncomfortable or indeed less threatening, and over which they have control.

During the focus group at the Location KL I made the assessment that the ASB being described by the older residents was of the type and level at which the booklet was aimed. I further considered that the type of behaviour and problem involved were appropriate for direct contact to take place if the participants so wished, after they had had some familiarisation with the booklet. Therefore, participants were each given a copy of the booklet and I spent time familiarising

them with its content and explaining how it could help. This familiarisation utilised some IIC principles, building on the booklet's approach which incorporates real-life scenarios to illustrate its message. In this however I was mindful of Crisp's, Stathi's, Turner's and Husnu's (2009) suggestion that the IIC model "is not seen as an intervention for attitude change, but as a means of promoting an interest and intention to engage in future actual contact" (p.231). I asked the participants to consider using the booklet as appropriate over the summer holidays. We agreed that I would contact them in the autumn to get their views on the booklet and for an update on any developments relating to the football-related issue.

Views on the booklet – Location KL

Focusing on the first section of the third proposition, a booklet can be an effective medium for influencing adults' perceptions of youth-related activity, encouragingly, as the findings in Chapter 8 demonstrate, there was support for the booklet from focus group participants. This included support from older residents who had been directly affected by the football-related problem, and the younger resident who was a close neighbour to both the parents of the children perceived to be causing the problems and the complainants. Indeed, one of the complainants most affected by the children playing football did admit that the content helped her see things from a different perspective. She commented that perhaps they should have been more understanding. Interestingly, these comments were made as a result of reading the booklet in which informative text and visual images of positive interaction were used, such as on pages 3-5 and 20-22, rather than based on direct interaction. These preliminary findings support the proposition that the booklet can be an effective

medium for influencing adults' perceptions of youth-related activity. Within the context of my research, where the focus was adults' perceptions, the findings converge with those of Cameron and Rutland (2006) and Cameron, et al. (2011). In this research children's perceptions (aged 5-10 years) of disabled children, and children's perceptions (aged 6-11 years) of children from ethnic minorities respectively were found to improve through extended contact via story telling. Similarly, my research findings complement those of, for example, Crisp and Turner (2009) and Dovidio, Eller and Hewstone (2011). They posit that by providing imagery of a positive scenario in which you can imagine oneself this is more likely to lead to improved intergroup interactions. Whilst clearly more research is needed, initial indications emanating from the piloting of the booklet is that the booklet does have the potential to influence adults' perceptions of youth related activity.

Update on the football-related problem

Data collected in the follow up telephone interviews showed that, according to the complainants, the football-related problem had subsided, but not as a result of the complainants making direct contact with the children or their parents. Within the findings detailed in Chapter 8, no substantive evidence on which to form an explanation for the improvement is available. Assumptions were made by the older residents that the CPSO had dealt with the problem by talking to the relevant parents and children. According to the CPSO, this had not been the case. The complainants also assumed that the improvement had come about due to the deliberate actions of parents allowing their children to play at the recreation ground, although they had no hard evidence to corroborate this. A further hypothesis advanced by the complainants was that the neighbour who

was a friend of the children's parents, as a result of attending the focus group, had made the parents more aware of how the complainants felt and the parents had acted to reduce the problem. Additional data gathered, of which the complainants were unaware existed, confirmed that this had indeed happened. Also the neighbour reported showing the booklet to the parents and had explained its purpose. A fair supposition is that both the booklet, attendance at the focus group, and subsequent reporting back to the parents, had an impact and had galvanised the parents to act to improve the situation. However, it would of course be necessary to gather data from the parents themselves for confirmation of this.

Continuing project – further focus group

Given the unanswered questions detailed above, I offered to continue developing the booklet implementation with a view to understanding more fully what factors had led to the improvement. Also I felt it was important to establishing what could be done to sustain the improvements. Initially during the telephone interviews, the majority of the respondents expressed a willingness to remain involved; however, upon reflection a few changed their minds. Initially, for me, this was a disappointing outcome, although through analysing my findings against literature relating to the SCT and agency I was able to put meaning to the reasons given for this decision. This knowledge is important for the future development of the booklet, and in this respect I return to the concept of self-efficacy discussed earlier in this chapter.

Bandura (1998) posits claims that individuals who perceive themselves to have low levels of self-efficacy are more prone to take a pessimistic view. This view

is echoed by Brannan, John and Stoker (2006) who state that residents who adopt a pessimistic view of their ability to affect positive change have low levels of self-efficacy and are less likely to exercise personal agency. Pessimism was clearly felt by one telephone interviewee who, whilst expressing a desire to take a lead in facilitating the continuation of the project, felt that this would be futile given the extended period over which the problem had existed. She felt that the animosity which had built up over four years would be difficult to address. According to the SCT, one's level of self efficacy can be adversely affected if there is little motivation to act. As Bandura (1999) explains:

“Human motivation and action is extensively regulated through anticipative mechanism of forethought. People anticipate the likely consequences of prospective actions ... and they plan courses of action that are likely to produce desired outcomes and avoid detrimental ones. ... By being represented cognitively in the present, conceived future states are converted into current motivators and regulators of behaviour”. (Bandura, 1999, p.27)

Given the improved situation in The Close, the older residents had got what they had hoped for and therefore lacked motivation to continue with the project. They stated that they felt it was better to ‘leave well alone’; they felt it was best to ‘let sleeping dogs lie’. I suggest that this implies that they did not feel confident that any future action on their part would not re-ignite past problems which acted as de-motivator to exercising personal agency.

Adults' intolerance of YP's behaviour was identified in the literature in Chapter 2 as a driver of intergenerational tensions (Burney, 2009; Millie, 2007, 2009; Waiton, 2008). My findings included some respondents commenting that older residents' intolerance of YP was a cause of problems. In Location KL, I perceived intolerance as a type of behaviour belonging in a category with the

social dominance and authoritarian tendencies discussed earlier. The post-implementation data showed no improvement in tolerance levels. It is noteworthy that according to my substantial literature research relating to ITT, to date intolerance has not been tested as an antecedent of threat and /or intergroup tensions. This I consider to be an area meriting further attention, since the literature demonstrates that tolerance is a type of behaviour which could affect adults' perceptions of ASB.

Future Developments

The evidence discussed in this chapter supports the notion that for the booklet to be successful its implementation needs to be supplemented with workshops to reinforce the message contained in the booklet. Workshops could also incorporate improving individual's sense of self-efficacy so they felt more disposed to exercising personal agency. In this respect it would be appropriate to draw on the work of Pajares (2002) who suggests four different and complementary strategies for doing this. The first he terms as mastery experience which involves helping people develop the belief in their ability to perform successfully which gives them the belief they can continue to do so in the future.

Pajares (2002) warns that the sense of self-efficacy developed through this strategy can be fragile and easily negatively affected by other factors.

However, he suggests that self-efficacy can be further reinforced by exposure to vicarious experience. This term refers to the information and skills enhanced through the observation of others. An important consideration in designing future workshops is Pajares' (2002) comment that "vicarious experience is

particularly powerful when observers see similarities in some attributes and then assume that the models of performance is diagnostic of their own capability” (p.7).

A suggestion put forward by one of the members of the SNT team was that workshops could be effective where complainants were exposed to the influence of peers who held positive perceptions of YP and willingly interacted with them. This as a suggestion is supported by the third strategy for improving self-efficacy; a strategy which Pajares (2002) terms as social persuasions. He states that “persuaders play an important part in the development of an individual’s self-beliefs” (p.7). However, he also advocates that this process should be undertaken over a period of time and that attainment targets should be achievable. Research has shown that where an individual with racial prejudice was put into an environment where this was not shared by others, the prejudice diminished:

“The amount of prejudice that people express towards different groups is highly correlated with the social approval of that expression and has been found to be affected by manipulation of this social approval. ... [M]anipulating the apparent consensus of ingroup attitudes towards Black changed the beliefs of White participants about the stereotypes of that group, a change that persisted in an unrelated session a week later”. (De Tezanos, Bratt and Brown, 2010, p.508)

Pajares (2002) also highlights that somatic (physical) and emotional states which manifest themselves as, for example, anxiety and stress can also adversely affect self-efficacy. As is evident from the findings discussed in Chapter 6, some research participants experience negative emotional reactions at the prospect of interaction with YP. Whilst the booklet seeks to deal with

this, I would suggest that activities that help to reduce this kind of anxiety and stress should also be incorporated into workshops. Incorporating activities designed to encourage greater tolerance would also be beneficial. Also, as with social persuasion, I would suggest that such work should be carried out over a period of time. This view is supported by Blair, Ma and Lenton (2001) based on their research into the use of mental imagery to improve intergroup tensions, who argue that “a single counter-stereotype episode would have only a minute effect” (p.838) on reducing intergroup tensions.

My booklet, whilst originally being intended for use by adults, was designed to be accessible and easily understood, using both text and illustrations; it was suggested by some SNT members that it could well serve also as a resource for use with YP, in schools for example.

As previously explained, the scope of my research did not extend to carrying out a full evaluation of the booklet’s effectiveness. That would have been inappropriate at this pilot study stage. The conclusions I was able to draw regarding my third proposition from residents’ responses are accordingly preliminary. There was agreement at the focus group that the booklet was worthwhile, that it helped people to adopt a different perspective, and that it should assist in addressing ASB. There was however in practice a lower level of willingness to engage with YP, apparently due in part to the main problem having diminished (probably as a result of activity generated by the booklet’s introduction). This was to an extent a disappointing outcome, but it had a very worthwhile impact on my research by leading me to analyse the possible reasons for the older residents’ attitude. The concept of self-efficacy, linked to

motivation, was the best-fitting theoretical explanation. It led me to the important insight, regarding my third subsidiary proposition; that a booklet such as “Let’s Talk” is potentially effective in influencing adults’ perceptions of youth-related activity and assisting individuals and communities to deal with ASB. However to achieve maximum effectiveness its introduction needs to be supported by activities to increase residents’ self-efficacy. Further research, going beyond the scope of this study, will be required to establish how best to incorporate such activities as a preliminary stage to implementing the booklet in other locations.

Chapter 10

Conclusions

The project which my research studied was an innovative approach to addressing low level youth-related ASB employing a practical and easily understood booklet designed to be used by the public. Extensive research indicated that this had not been done before. Most existing research on ASB-related issues adopted a sociological perspective. Intergroup research, on which Intergenerational Practice draws, predominantly used a social psychological perspective, however little of that research had ASB as its main focus. Therefore, my work is innovative in adopting a social psychological approach as the lens through which to carry out research into ASB.

My research is broadly situated within the social constructionist paradigm, and associated case study methodology, research tools such as questionnaires, focus groups, and software-based data analysis. I adopted an inductive approach both to develop propositions which were then reviewed against my findings, and to identify significant new issues for which I sought theoretical explanations and which I reviewed in the context of my findings. Leading examples were the value of Integrated Threat Theory and Social Cognitive Theory, discussed below.

From this process I developed insights which I then reviewed as to their importance. Using a typology of 'Implications for practice' and 'Implications for research', I went on to review those insights which I considered significant and

representing new knowledge. The detailed review of my conclusions begins with my propositions.

I began the Let's Talk study with the main proposition:

Intergenerational approaches can be a useful way of understanding and addressing tensions associated with perceived anti-social behaviour by YP.

Derived from this were three sub-propositions, which I will now discuss in turn in the light of my research findings.

My first sub-proposition is:

Residents' perceptions of youth-related anti-social behaviour are influenced by a number of factors, including government policy, local context and individuals' characteristics.

My analysis has confirmed that local context and individuals' characteristics contribute strongly to the perceptions adults have about YP and their behaviour. Local context was an important issue, with some commonly identified factors such as location, time of day, previous local experience, and the size of group of YP involved. Individuals' characteristics also emerged as heavily influencing adults' perceptions. A cross case comparison of the qualitative data demonstrated how different people interpreted similar behaviour in markedly dissimilar ways, with some considering it anti-social whereas others saw it as "kids will be kids" and tolerable. The Integrated Threat Theory, which I will return to later, helped to identify personality traits which influenced individuals' perceptions of YP.

Interestingly, data gave no indication that government policy impacted on adults' perceptions. No participants made any direct reference to government policy which suggests that this had no major direct impact on their perceptions. Chapter 2 includes discussion of literature which identifies the media as contributing inappropriately to the construction of negative public perceptions of YP. However, whilst the national media was mentioned briefly in two focus groups, participants did not take this as a cue to engage in an extended discussion on this issue. Whilst the media may in fact have played a bigger part in influencing participants' views this was not reflected in the data collected, hence I have to assume that in my case study the media had little influence on perceptions.

The conclusion that personal factors and local context were the most significant in influencing perceptions, whilst modifying part of my first sub-proposition, does in fact endorse the rationale of the Let's Talk booklet. It was designed precisely to influence personal perceptions of ASB by encouraging individuals to address factors which they can affect, namely their own attitudes. Conversely, had government policy emerged as the dominant factor, the booklet would have been much less relevant.

My second sub-proposition reads:

Theories associated with intergenerational practice can be used to explain some of the issues associated with perceived low level youth-related ASB.

This proposition is supported by the findings of my data interrogation. As was demonstrated in Chapter 8, several theories were particularly pertinent, with Realistic Intergroup Conflict Theory, Social Identity Theory and Deficit of Intergenerational Contact Theory all contributing to a better understanding of ASB-related problems. Their value is however qualified by this understanding being compartmentalised as a function of using the different theories. The Integrated Threat Theory in contrast provides a more comprehensive framework within which a fuller understanding of the problems can be developed, including the importance of taking full account of social dynamics other than intergenerational. It has also facilitated a greater depth and granularity of information being gleaned from the data, which contributes to a richer theoretical explanation of the intergroup tensions associated with ASB. Since research has not shown ITT to be a theory generally associated with intergenerational practice, my second sub-proposition is valid as far as it goes, but on reflection it does not go far enough.

My third and final sub-proposition is:

A booklet can be an effective medium for: (a) influencing adults' perceptions of youth-related activity, and (b) assisting individuals and communities to deal with ASB.

Support for the booklet was evident from within the different groups involved in the pilot. In both the workshops attended by representatives from different sectors of the communities, at the meetings with the SNT, and in the correspondence gathered, strong support was voiced in favour of utilising the booklet to tackle ASB-related issues. None of the participants rejected the

booklet outright. This acceptance in principle was encouraging as far as it went, but the disinclination to exercise personal agency which inhibited practical use of the booklet by local residents was very significant. Drawing on the SCT, I consider this reluctance to be due to low levels of self-efficacy on the part of individuals. Accordingly the third proposition has been endorsed only to a limited extent. As discussed later, it appears that for the booklet to be fully effective it will require additional supportive measures.

Relationship to Existing Research

I now turn to an overview of how my work relates to existing research literature. As was demonstrated in Chapter 2, a considerable amount of literature posits that adult perceptions of youth-related ASB are influenced by personal and social factors. For example, Burney (2006) and Millie (2009) argue strongly that context is an important influence on perceptions of ASB. Particularly interesting was Atkinson's and Flint's (2007) conclusion that even in small geographical areas views may vary. My findings support that this can be the case, as was illustrated in Location KL where the problems that emerged from the data involved only 5 out of the 29 houses canvassed. My data also confirmed Squires' (2008) statement that personal relationships and interactions are important predictors; these emerged as strongly influencing the situation in location KL.

Existing research into intergenerational projects covers a wide range of social issues, such as community building, for instance the young and old working together to improve a physical outdoor space; arts-based projects in which the

generations work collaboratively on for example a drama production; and involving older adults in classroom activities in schools. To the limited extent that youth-related ASB has been researched, it has generally been as a subsidiary issue. My work extends the literature on intergenerational issues by focusing specifically on youth-related ASB

In the past IP has focused on a bilateral relationship between two generations, but recently it has been proposed that more attention should be directed at developing knowledge on a multi-generational basis. The findings in Location KL showed that the tensions described were indeed multi-generational, involving the complainants, parents of the children, and the children.

It is common in intergenerational projects involving both young and older people for an intermediary to be involved, in a facilitating role. It is clear from my findings that the SNT considered it should maintain overall control of the booklet's implementation in KL, thereby acting as an intermediary. My findings therefore give added weight to the views expressed by Moore and Statham (2006) and Springate, Atkinson and Martin (2008) that full account of the impact this additional variable can have on project delivery and outcomes must be taken into account, and contribute to the knowledge on which IP can draw on developmentally in future.

Pettigrew, Tropp, Wagner and Christ (2011) argued that the direct contact model has a stronger and longer lasting positive effect on reducing intergroup tensions than does the indirect contact model. They also suggest that the indirect contact model, of which the Imagined Intergroup Contact is a derivative,

should be developed to act as a stepping stone to future direct contact. My research confirms that the booklet represents an approach which could be effective in delivering this intermediate stage.

Contribution to Knowledge - Implications for Theory

Methodologically, as is demonstrated in Chapter 2, a significant amount of research into the nature and causes of, and responses to, ASB has been undertaken through a sociological lens (for example Burney, 2009; Millie, 2009; Moore, 2010; Prior, 2009; Squires, 2008). In diverging from this approach by introducing a theoretical analysis of data by using the SCT (Bandura, 2006) and the ITT (Stephen and Renfro, 2002) I have introduced a social psychological perspective. This has facilitated a greater in-depth understanding of the ASB-related issues of negative perceptions and agency in relation to governance.

Intergroup contact theory has been developing for over fifty years (Hewstone and Swart, 2011). A significant amount of research has now been carried out to support its development and its potential beneficial effects on intergroup tensions (Pettigrew, and Tropp, 2006). However, a greater volume of literature relates to the direct contact model than to any of the others explained in Chapter 3. The imagined intergroup contact model is a relatively new development in this field. The limited research carried out to date, which shows that simulation of positive social encounters with outgroup members can reduce intergroup anxiety which in turn reduces prejudice of outgroup members (Turner, Crisp and Lambert, 2007), has mainly been undertaken in a quasi experimental setting (Crisp, Stathi, Turner and Husnu, 2009). Although because of the reluctance of Location KL residents to undertake personal

agency it was not possible to establish the case definitively, there was evidence that the booklet had good potential to be an effective IIC tool. Piloting research into IIC in a natural setting and using a story-telling approach both represent new developments and new knowledge in this subset of ICT theory by adding context to when, where and with whom its effects are realised.

Whilst theories frequently associated with intergenerational practice such as RICT, SIT and DICT all assisted in interpreting my findings, and literature has shown that they support a better understanding of ASB-related problems, their value is somewhat limited in that they provide answers to specific parts of the overall picture. In my research I show how Integrated Threat Theory provides a more comprehensive theoretical framework and serves as a rich resource with regard to, for example, antecedents to threat and ingroup-outgroup relations (Stephan and Renfro, 2002). Whilst ITT has been used extensively to research a variety of conflictual intergroup relationships such as ethnicity, I have added to knowledge in the intergenerational field by demonstrating the effectiveness of ITT as a theoretical framework pertinent to the study of youth-related ASB issues. Building on existing arguments that ITT research should extend beyond bilateral into multilateral relationships, my research indicates that this is indeed the case if ITT is to maximise its potential value in intergenerational work, where three or indeed possibly more groups could be involved.

Bandura's (2001) work on Social Cognitive Theory provided an effective theoretical framework for exploring issues on agency, and underlined the concept of self-efficacy. Importantly, combined with my research design it

produced a more granular insight into residents' views on governance of ASB. My conclusion was that the reluctance of older residents' in location KL to undertake personal agency by directly engaging with YP, despite having previously supported the use of the booklet, was due to their low sense of self-efficacy. The corollary was that for the booklet approach to be most effective, it appeared that additional preparatory work aimed at increasing self-efficacy would be required. I consider that identifying SCT as an important tool for future intergenerational and ASB-related research is a further contribution to knowledge.

Contribution to Knowledge - Implications for Practice

An important research finding was that in this case study it would have been a mistake to assume that youth-related ASB problems could be fully explained by focusing on intergenerational issues. The granular information I obtained by using a social psychological research perspective enabled me to identify the lack of social contact between RAF families and ex-Army families and the negative stereotyping by the latter of the former in Location KL. This is an example of how social dynamics other than age can add a significant further dimension to the situation. This finding indicates that when designing projects, practitioners need to explore beyond the apparently obvious explanation in order to fully understand the social dynamics involved.

The argument advanced earlier in this chapter that ITT as a theoretical framework needs to be developed beyond bilateral relationships has a similar implication for practice. The assumption I had made, and which was rolled forward through the workshop stage, was that the booklet would be used by

older residents in addressing issues with YP. In the event some parents of the YP were also involved, indicating that practitioners designing projects using the ICT should be aware of the scope for contact taking place at more than one level.

Despite the expressed willingness of some of the Location KL residents to use the booklet, in practice they were unwilling to become engaged, which I ascribed to low self-efficacy linked to loss of motivation when the football-related problems reduced. My conclusion was that to achieve maximum effectiveness the booklet's introduction would need to be preceded by supportive activities designed to increase residents' self-efficacy. This might take the form of workshops for example, although further research will be required to establish how best to design and deliver such activities. The knowledge generated by my research, particularly in relation to antecedents to threat, and to the relationship between the concepts of self-efficacy and agency provides valuable information which will facilitate the creation of appropriate workshops.

Strengths and Limitations

In opting for a case study approach I consciously accepted the generic advantages and disadvantages that it would entail. Within those parameters, a main limitation of my research is the lack of a full evaluation. Also, the lack of data being collected from the parents of 'problem' children in Location KL at the telephone interview stage, described in Chapter 4, represents a further shortcoming.

It could be argued that accepting research funding imposed limitations on me as a researcher and on my findings. I outlined in Chapter 4 the role of the funders and my view is that their role did not impose undue constraints or introduce any significant bias. Indeed, the involvement of these or other funders was essential. Without financial support I would not have had the resources to develop the Let's Talk booklet or to undertake the pilot research, and in consequence valuable knowledge would not have been generated.

The strengths of my research include its originality, using a social psychological approach to research ASB and its governance, and exploring the use of an innovative practical initiative. Endorsing the views of a number of academics, my research builds on their work by adding new knowledge relevant to both theory and practice, including the use of Imagined Intergroup Contact, Social Cognitive Theory and Integrated Threat Theory as theoretical frameworks in the fields of intergenerational and ASB-related research. I identify the importance for practice of fully understanding social dynamics going beyond intergenerational issues, of taking account of multilateral as well as bilateral issues in intergroup relationships, and of the importance of self-efficacy as a precondition for successful deployment of personal agency.

As I acknowledged in Chapter 4, "interpretive research begins and ends with the biography and self of the researcher" (Denzin, 1989, p.12). In Chapter 1, to position myself within my research, I disclosed my personal interest in Intergenerational Practice and my belief that in some instances teenagers' behaviour could be unjustifiably classed by adults as anti-social. Also, I

believed that related projects principally focused on correcting teenage behaviour and rarely majored on addressing unnecessarily negative adult attitudes. Reflecting on my stance at the end of the research I still believe that young people's behaviour can be harshly judged, but I also have empathy with adults who are subject to annoying behaviour over an extended period. My research has endorsed my view that there is value in utilising projects (such as the Let's Talk booklet) aimed at adults. However I have also come to realise that there may be more advantage to be gained from working with both age groups; perhaps separately at first, then together subsequently.

Future Research

The implications I identify for both theory and practice indicate a number of topics into which future research should be carried out, building on my conclusions.

As already mentioned, a limitation in my research was that I did not carry out a full evaluation of the booklet's implementation. Further valuable knowledge would be gained by undertaking a project using the booklet in different locations with an appropriate level and type of ASB, carrying out a full evaluation in each location, and undertaking a longitudinal study in one or more locations. I would also recommend incorporating supportive activities such as workshops to improve self-efficacy, and for their effectiveness to be part of the evaluation.

Whilst I have discussed the reasons why my field research did not include working directly with children, I believe that my evidence base would have been stronger had I done so. Research to assess YP's views on the potential use of

the booklet with their age group would enhance knowledge and further contribute to both theory and practice.

Undertaking research similar to mine in other settings such as schools (subject to having obtained an appropriate outcome from the previous recommendation) or parenting groups would add further knowledge to theory, in particular in employing SCT as a theoretical framework for governance issues, and using the ITT to research intergenerational tensions.

Further research into the use of my enhanced version of IIC, based on a booklet with a story-telling approach as a stepping stone to direct contact, would contribute new insights to the debate about direct and indirect contact models.

My final recommendation for further research is for studies to be undertaken into extending the ITT theory to take account of multilateral as well as bilateral issues.

In summary, my study has highlighted that there is potential for further development of the booklet and related research. My next step will be to seek the opportunity to develop workshop material to support implementation of the booklet in different social settings and subsequently undertake a full evaluation. I believe there is new practical and theoretical knowledge to be gained from extending my research.

Research Aim

In summary, my study fulfils its research aim which is to identify and provide explanations for:

- a sample situation in which using the booklet might be appropriate;
- factors relevant to its potential for achieving successful outcomes; and
- issues pertinent to its ongoing development and use.

From both professional and personal perspectives the experience of planning, researching and writing my thesis was greatly challenging and immensely satisfying. Looking back, I can see how my skills have developed through the PhD process, and I am now very keen to put them to good use by carrying out further research projects.

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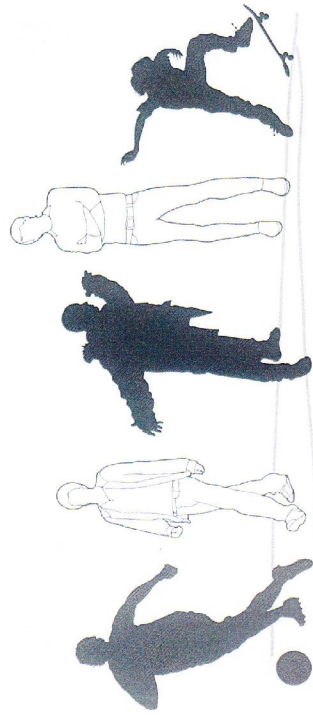
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Appendix 1 (pp.360-379) represents a scanned copy of the Let's Talk booklet.





TEENAGERS

Are they bothered?

Yes, they're bothered!!!

They're bothered by the way the majority are stereotyped, based on the bad behaviour of a minority.

Youth Net (2006). Respect: The Voice behind the hood

This guide has been written by Elaine Statham, Senior Lecturer in Social Policy at Anglia Ruskin University, Cambridge following research into intergenerational conflict and communication.

Photographic and Design work by Rhian White at dare to know ltd.

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Introduction

What's this guide all about?

It's to help adults and young people in our communities get along with each other better. Why? Well, thankfully we don't have anything like the sort of problems seen in some inner cities. But there are times when we have difficulties between the older and younger generations.

Why do we need it?

We did research which gathered the views of some 150 people with ages ranging from 11 to over 70. We found that many people would really like to resolve this sort of issue within the community.

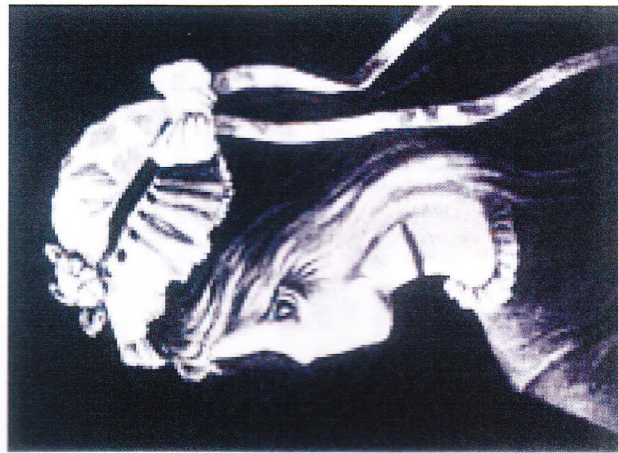
How does it work?

The guide encourages people to be tolerant of each other, and to understand different points of view. It offers common-sense, practical guidance on some of the things that you as a member of the community can do to help improve matters.

Will it make any difference?

This guide doesn't claim to give all the answers. But we know that these ideas can work - the guidance is based on tried and tested approaches. As you'll see, a lot of it is based on a single word - communication. Please read on!

It depends on how you look at it...



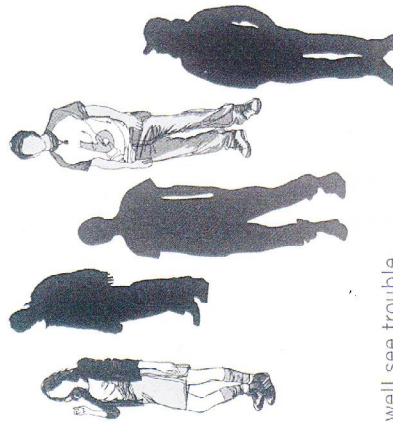
How often have you heard that?

Sometimes it's literally true. Take a look at the picture above - what do you see? Some people see a young woman; others see an old lady. Some people can easily see both.

(Here's a tip: the young woman's chin and the old lady's nose are the same).

IMAGINE

You're walking along the street... there are 5 or 6 teenagers standing around on the pavement ahead.

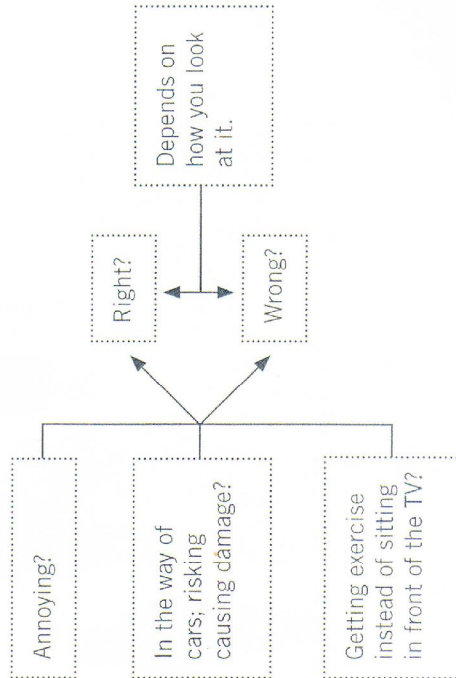


What do you see?

- An **elderly** person may well see trouble, and cross over or turn back.
- A **parent** may see some of their teenager's mates - or indeed their own son or daughter.
- A **teenager** is more likely to see the chance to have a chat and a laugh.



If you see kids playing football in the street do you think they're



Very often, sorting out community problems starts with trying to understand how the 'other side' looks at things, before trying to 'do something about it'.

What do we want in our communities?

- somewhere pleasant to live.
- feel safe.
- good friends and neighbours.
- the time and space to enjoy ourselves.
- people not poking their noses into our business.
- peace and quiet.

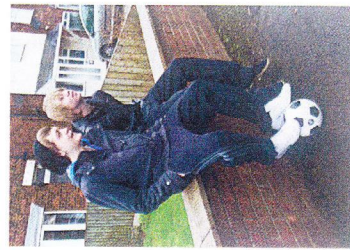
In many respects youngsters want just the same sort of thing.

For example they:

- don't want to be supervised by adults all day long.
- want somewhere to go, something to do with their friends.
- want to feel safe.

From their point of view, it's perfectly reasonable:

- to 'hang out' on a street corner.
- to sit on a garden wall.



They may not realise that their behaviour can look suspicious or threatening to others.

According to the British Crime Survey, younger people are more likely than older people to worry about being the victim of violent attack.

THINK TWICE

before sticking an anti-social behaviour label on youngsters

- Do you really need to get worked up about it?
- Or are there times when you just need to be a bit more tolerant - maybe remembering your own younger days and how you were?
- Are you sure it's the same group of young people you have seen previously?

Remember, if you speak in an angry tone, it is quite possible that you will be responded to angrily.



6

What is 'anti-social behaviour'?

Anti-social behaviour

- is very **subjective**.
- what one person perceives as anti-social another may not.
- if left unchecked can lead to neighbourhood decline
 - seriously damaging the quality of life for people.
 - whether directly or indirectly affected.

Legal definition of anti-social behaviour is

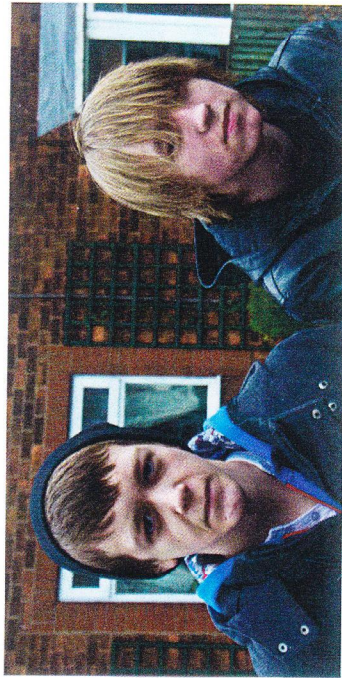
Behaviour that causes harassment, alarm or distress to one or more persons not of the same household as him or herself (Crime and Disorder Act 1998).

Behaviour which continues over a period of time

Irrespective of the type of behaviour concerned, the main test is that there is a pattern of behaviour which **continues over a period of time** which causes harassment, alarm or distress.

7

Examples of Anti-Social Behaviour



- Intimidating gatherings of people in public places where there is persistent unruly behaviour.
- Harassment (including racist and homophobic incidents).
- Verbal abuse.
- Aggressive and intimidating behaviour.
- Drunk and disorderly behaviour.
- Damage to property (including graffiti and vandalism).
- Excessive noise.

(These are **examples only** and should not be considered as a complete list).

Shouldn't the police or the council deal with anti-social behaviour?

The police are responsible for dealing with criminal behaviour; the Community Safety Team deals with the majority of anti-social behaviour cases.

What is not considered as anti-social behaviour?

- kids playing football.
- skateboarding in the street.
- teenagers gathering in a group in a public place.

(Provided it doesn't involve any of the types of behaviour detailed on the previous page).

If behaviour doesn't fit the definition described on page 8, then it isn't a case for the Community Safety Team to get involved in.

This toolkit is designed to deal with just those types of behaviour which cause a problem for some within the community, but which don't call for the involvement of the Community Safety Team.



How YOU can help in dealing with problems

However, there may be times when you feel teenagers are causing a nuisance. If there is a real problem, there is often a way of approaching it.

Here are some golden rules that are worth following:

- **Think** about what you want to say.
- **Approach** the person(s) yourself.
- **Explain** what it is that is disturbing you.
- If you are feeling angry **wait** until you are calm.
- **Avoid** using abusive or aggressive language.
- **Ask** the other person/people how they see things.
- **Try** to understand their point of view.
- **Try** to get a dialogue going - communication is a two way process!
- **Don't** interrupt when others are talking.
- **Concentrate** on what they are saying, and think about it.
- **Leave** the situation if it becomes too heated.

To see this in practice, see pages 12-28

10

How do young and older people see each other?

These are some of the things they told us ...

A lot of teenagers feel that adults don't listen to them enough

"Mostly I've found that the older people (my grand-parents' generation) don't really listen to teenagers' ideas or thoughts."

"My family is interested in my opinions. I'm not sure about any other adults."

"Adults think we're always doing things bad but we don't, they just like having a go."



Some adults were very negative, but many were prepared to be open-minded

"Working with some young people has made me realise that not all of them are anti-social. These were an 'absolute delight'."

"They should be given the opportunity to prove that they are good citizens."



"They're not all out to cause mayhem. The ones I encounter are decent polite and friendly."

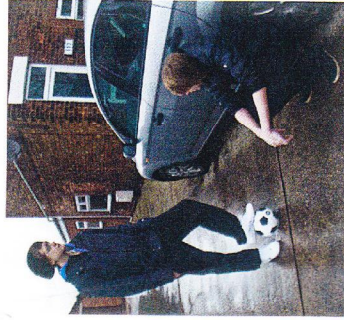
11



Just another boring evening in 'The Close'!

The following pages tell three different stories about what could happen next with our fictitious characters.

Scenario 1

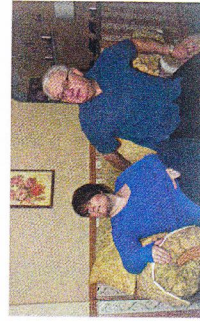


"If only there was somewhere to go, something to do..."



"...anything to do, instead of hanging around this boring place."

"Oh no, not those kids again – I'm sick of them coming here, causing a nuisance."



"C'mon Dan, let's have a kick-about."





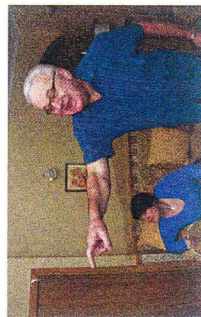
"Watch this!...."



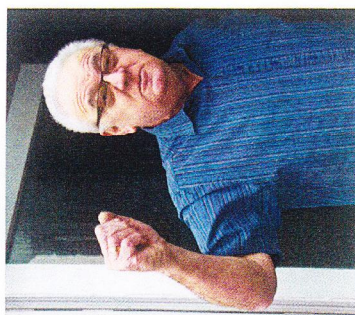
"Oh no!!"



"I'll go and get the ball before the old misery starts up."



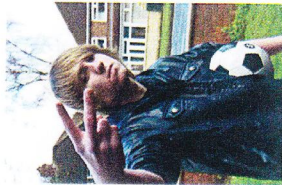
"That is it! Right you phone the police and I'm going to give them a piece of my mind."



"You stupid morons! I'm fed up of you here every bloody night! If you do that again, you'll see the back of my hand."



"...Yes, officer it IS an emergency. We've had just about enough of this. We can't get a moment's peace from these thugs. Yes, my husband is out there now. No, I want you to come here and do something now!"



"Don't threaten me old man, I'm not afraid of you."

"No, you're the moron. Why don't you get a life and leave us alone."



"C'mon then, try it ... just try it."

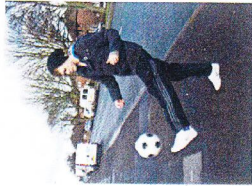


"Dan, there's a cop car coming -- let's get out of here."

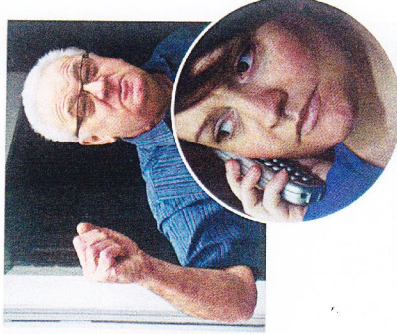


Next day...

"Twenty-five, twenty-six..."



"Oi, you! I warned you. We've phoned the police and this time you and all your mates are in for it. I've told them all about you."



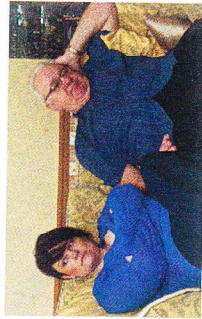
"You miserable old sod -- we won't forget this in a hurry."

"That's just a start -- we'll be back!"



Scenario 2

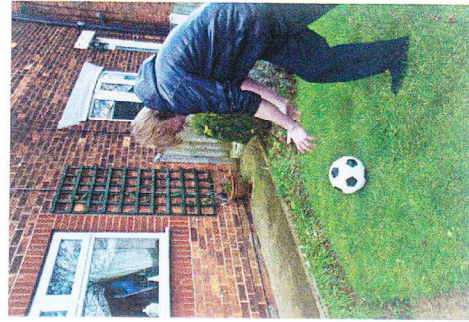
"Sounds like those
lads are around again."



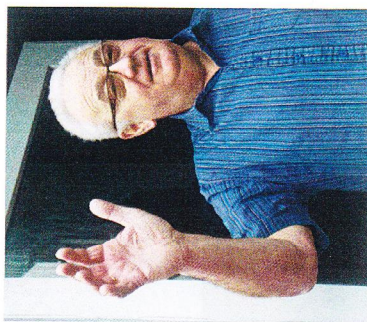
"Oh no!!"



"Watch this!..."

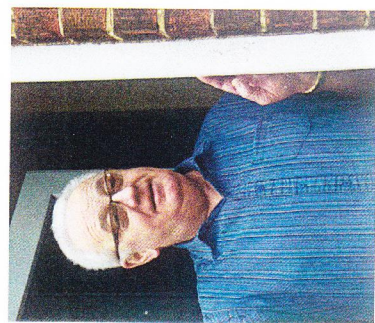


"I'll go and get the
ball."



"Hello lads,
any problems?"

"Oh, no I was just
collecting the ball."

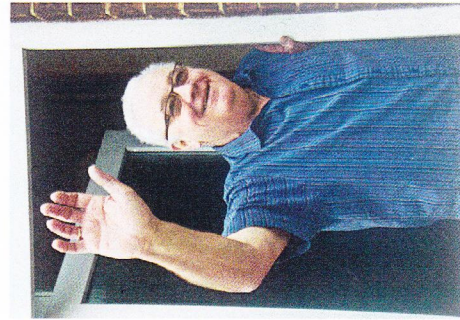


"That's no problem. Feel
free to get it back whenever
you want. I'd really appreci-
ate it if you didn't kick the
ball against the house after
9.30 though, as we go to
bed early. Is that OK?
Have a good evening."

20



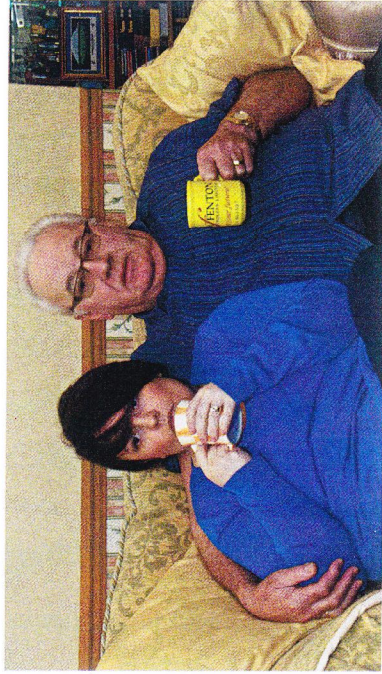
"That old bloke's OK; not like that miserable so and so at 51.
He just said could we leave off after 9.30ish. Fair enough."



"You know, most
young people are fine.
Perhaps they are a bit
thoughtless about older
people like us, but to
be honest, I was no
angel when I was
young. It's all about
give and take really."

21

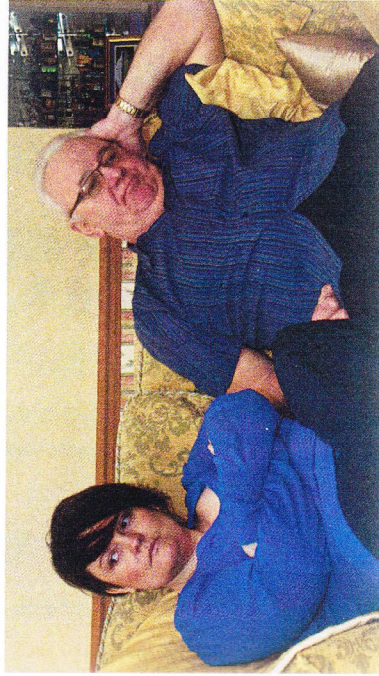
Scenario 3



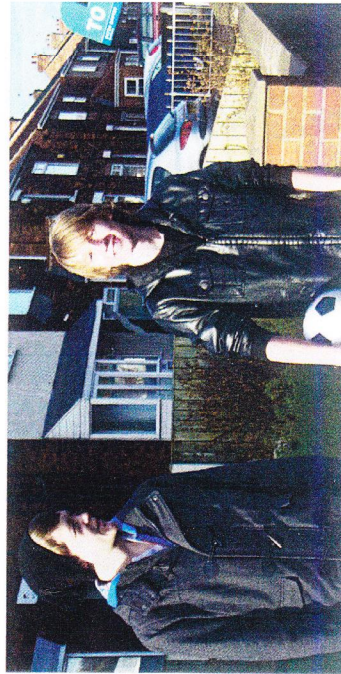
"Nice lads those. Just wish all young people were like that."



"C'mon Dan, let's have a kick-about."



"Oh no, not those kids again – I'm sick of them coming here, causing a nuisance."



"It feels OK when you get treated with a bit of respect. I suppose even old people were young once, though it seems hard to believe! Anyway, I wouldn't like anyone hassling my grandma – so fair do's, we'll give them a bit of space."



"Watch this!..."



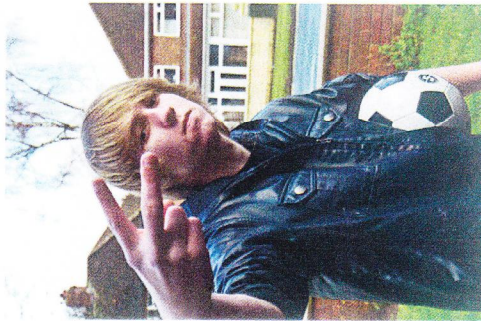
"Oh no!!!"



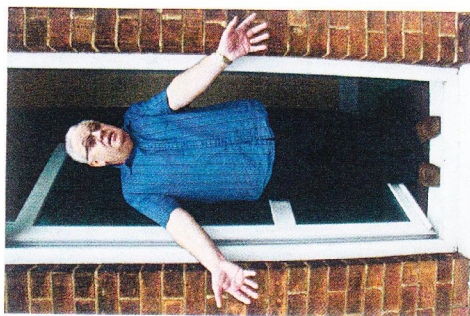
"I'll go and get the ball before the old misery starts up."



"Excuse me lads, you are welcome to come and get the ball, but do you mind not playing after 9.30 or so, as we like to go to bed early."



"Get stuffed! Nothing wrong with playing footie. Not my fault if the ball goes in your garden. You keep on moaning and we'll give you something to moan about."



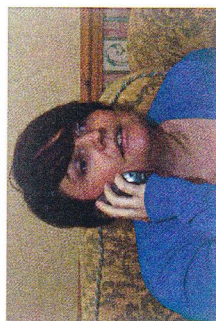
"Please don't be aggressive – I'm trying to be reasonable here. I appreciate you're bored, but we just don't like the ball thudding against our wall each evening when we go to bed."

"We'll be back you old git – when we want, not when you decide!"



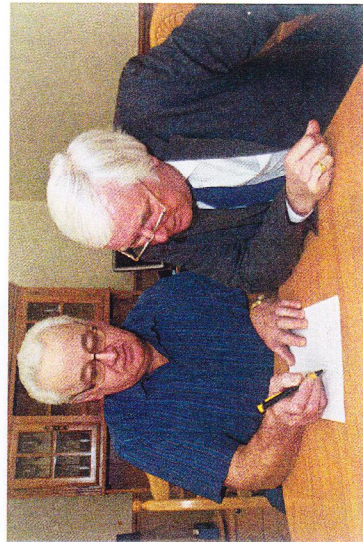
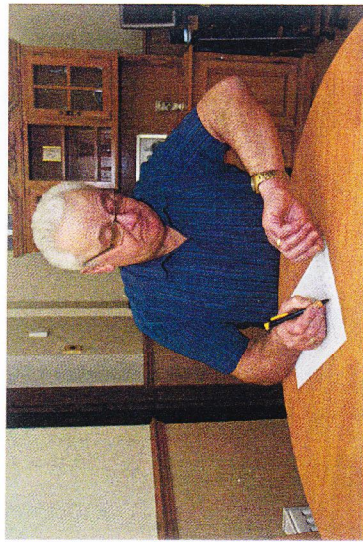
"That's just a start – we'll be back!"

"Hello, is that the ASB co-ordinator? We need some help."



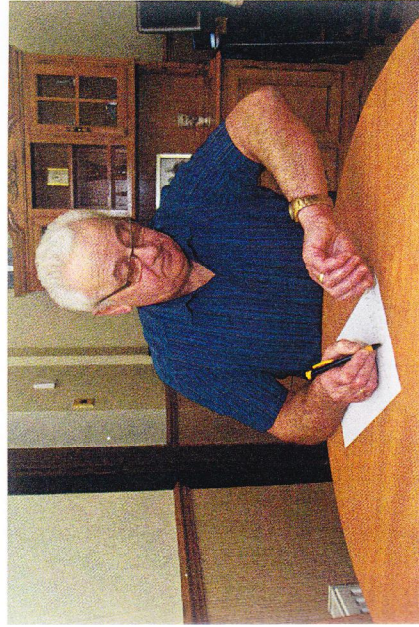
"Yes, we would be happy to help you. A colleague will visit you next week. Meanwhile please avoid any aggressive actions. Note down any incidents, their time and date. Speak to your neighbours and see if they are concerned too."





"Yes, I'm keeping a log of all incidents and my neighbours are too. They'll be coming round later. What shall we do next?"

If things don't improve



- start to collect evidence of the problem.
- include dates and times and nature of incidents.
- possibly take photographs e.g. of damage.
- if you know other people affected, perhaps ask them to keep records.

The next step is to contact your local Anti-Social Behaviour Officer (see pages 35 for details).

More scenarios in brief

Teenagers hanging around

This is how teenagers see it:

- hang out with mates – have a chat, have a laugh.
- go somewhere well lit because it's safer.
- nowhere else to go/nothing to do/bored.

This is how you could 'approach the situation':

- say hello.
- if you make a rule of saying hello to another adult, why not do the same to teenagers.
- if they're blocking the pavement, ask them to be considerate
- explain for example that:
 - older people may be worried about being jostled/falling.
 - mum with small children may find it difficult to get past with a push-chair.
- thank them when they respond positively to your request.

Teenagers skateboarding, biking

This is how teenagers see it:

- developing skills.
- learning from each other.
- getting exercise.

This is how you could 'approach the situation':

- ask them to be considerate and not endanger themselves (in traffic, for example) or other people.
- take an interest – some of the routines take real skill.
- talk to young people – what do they want, is it possible that something can be worked towards.
- if there isn't anywhere suitable for kids to use, maybe talk to Parish Councillor or Ward Councillor.
- we draw the line at recommending you have a go yourself!!!



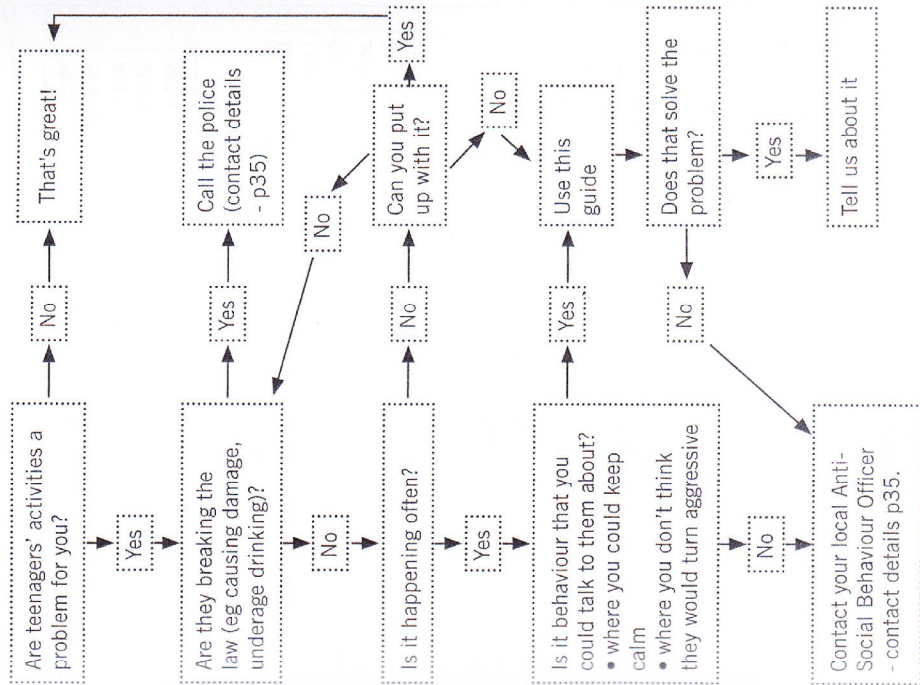
TOP TIPS

We talked to a number of professionals who regularly deal with problem situations - police officers, anti-social behaviour coordinators and youth workers.

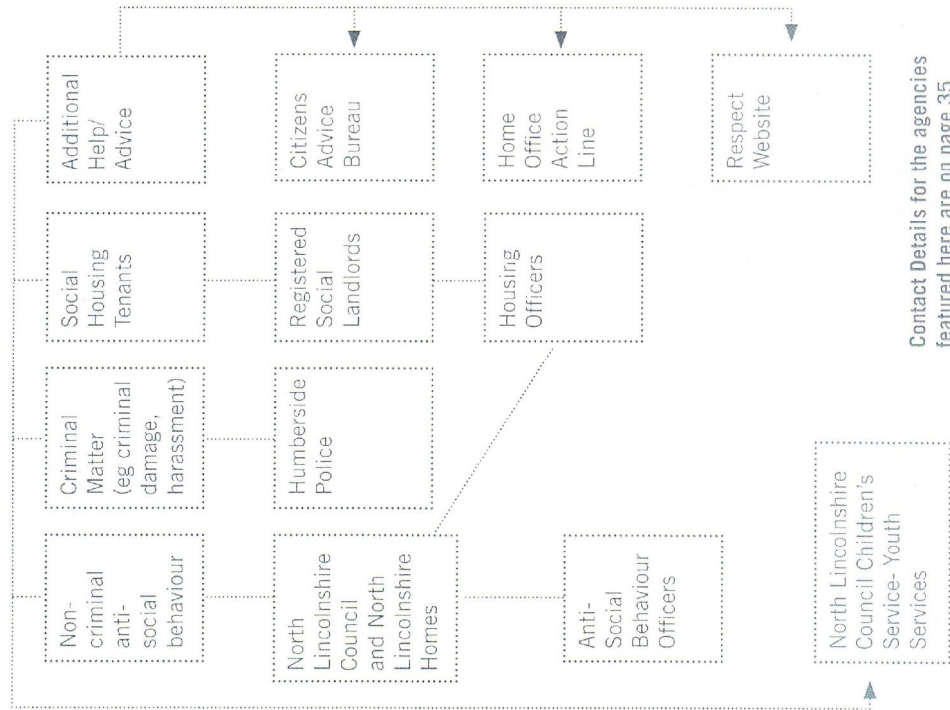
Here are some of the tips they gave:

- Explain what you want to talk about - it may be obvious to you, but it may not be to others.
- Try to relax - sure, it's not always easy, but take a deep breath and give it a go.
- Think about how your behaviour looks to others - smile, don't stand with your arms folded across your chest, don't wag your finger or point.
- Approach them in a friendly way; use a normal tone of voice.
- Don't assume that young people will respond aggressively - just treat them normally when you speak to them.
- Really listen to what people say - don't let your emotions colour your judgment.
- Be positive - the more determined you are to find a solution, the more likely it is to happen.
- Keep an open mind, and be prepared for some give and take.

Step by Step guide



Who else can help?



Contact Details for the agencies featured here are on page 35



Adult Questionnaire

Before commencing the questionnaire please ensure the interviewee has read the participant information sheet and signed the consent form.

Gender: Male ☐¹ Female ☐²

Age: 20-30 ☐¹ 31-40 ☐² 41-50 ☐³ 51-60 ☐⁴ 61-70 ☐⁵ 71+ ☐⁶

1. In your view are there enough activities for teenagers in the village?

Yes ☐¹ No ☐²

2. In the village do you think that adults view teenagers hanging around as a:

very big problem ☐¹ fairly big problem ☐² minor problem ☐³
not a problem ☐⁴

3. Do you personally view teenagers hanging around as a:

very big problem ☐¹ fairly big problem ☐² minor problem ☐³
not a problem ☐⁴

4. Have you personally had a negative experience of teenagers hanging around?

Yes ☐¹ (if 'Yes' please go to question 5)
No ☐² (if 'No' please go to question 9)

5. If yes, how often?

Everyday ☐¹ Once a week ☐² Once a month ☐³
Few times in last 12 mths ☐⁴ Once in last 12 mths ☐⁵

6. How has this experience affected you?

7. Has this experience influenced what activities you do outside your home?

Yes ☐¹ No ☐²

8. If yes, what types of activities?

9. If you meet a group of young people hanging around on the streets what do you do?

10. Would you be prepared to take part in a small group discussion in the village on the subject of teenagers hanging around?

Yes ☐¹ No ☐²

11. Which day of the week is most convenient? (circle as appropriate)

Mon¹ Tues² Wed³ Thurs⁴ Fri⁵

12. Which time of day is most convenient? (circle as appropriate)

morning¹ afternoon² evening³

If you have answered 'Yes' to question 10 please include your name and contact details below.

Name: _____

Contact details (address and/or telephone number):

Thank you for your help.



Adult Questionnaire

Before commencing the questionnaire please ensure the interviewee has read the participant information sheet. Within this research the term 'teenagers' is a general term used to refer to anyone aged between 12-19 years.

Gender: Male ☐¹ Female ☐²

Age: 20-30 ☐¹ 31-40 ☐² 41-50 ☐³ 51-60 ☐⁴ 61-70 ☐⁵ 71+ ☐⁶

1. In your view are there enough activities for teenagers in your area?

Yes ☐¹ No ☐² Don't know ☐³

2. In your area do you think that adults view teenagers hanging around as a:

very big problem ☐¹ fairly big problem ☐² minor problem ☐³
not a problem at all ☐⁴

3. Do you personally view teenagers hanging around as a:

very big problem ☐¹ fairly big problem ☐² minor problem ☐³
not a problem at all ☐⁴

4. If you meet a group of young people hanging around on the streets what do you do?

5. How would you generally describe your personal experience of teenagers hanging around?

Negative ☐¹ please go to question 6

Positive ☐² please go to question 8

Mix of positive/negative ☐³ please go to question 6

6. If you have had negative experiences, how often?

Everyday/almost everyday ☐¹ 2-3 times a week ☐² Once a week ☐³
2-3 times a month ☐⁴ Once a month ☐⁵ 2-3 times a year ☐⁶
Less often ☐⁷ Don't know ☐⁸

7. How has this experience affected you?

8. Would you be prepared to take part in a small group discussion in your area on the subject of teenagers hanging around?

Yes ☐¹ No ☐²

9. Which day of the week is most convenient? (circle as appropriate)

Mon¹ Tues² Wed³ Thurs⁴ Fri⁵

10. Which time of day is most convenient? (circle as appropriate)

morning¹ afternoon² evening³

If you have answered 'Yes' to question 8 please include your name and contact details below.

Name:

Contact details (address and/or telephone number):

Thank you for your help.

Appendix 4

LET'S TALK



My name is Elaine Statham. I am a Lecturer at Anglia Ruskin University, Cambridge and, in collaboration with Kings Lynn and West Norfolk Borough Council, I am working on a community project. It is important for the success of the project that I have the opportunity to speak with people in the village. Therefore, over the next few weeks I will be calling on people in Location X to ask them a few simple questions. The aim of this leaflet is to provide you with information on the project and help you decide whether or not you would be happy to help me by answering these questions.

I look forward to meeting you.

LET'S TALK

- How well do adults and teenagers communicate with each other?
- What does the older generation think about groups of kids on the streets?
- Would our community be better if only the different generations talked to each other more?

These are some of the questions I want to answer in a research project I'm carrying out, and I am asking if you will help me with this research. In order to decide whether to participate it is important that you understand why the study is taking place and what is involved. I hope by answering the questions outlined below I can provide you with the information you need.

What is the research project about? Called "Let's talk" the project is about:

- Understanding what younger and older people think about each other
- Identifying the causes of problems and tensions between the generations, such as kids hanging around on the streets
- Producing a practical information pack for local/parish councillors and community leaders on how to build a better dialogue with young people.

What will be involved if I take part? Firstly, you will be asked to complete a

short questionnaire. Secondly, a few weeks later, you may be invited to join a small group of adults to take part in an informal chat about the issues raised in the questionnaires. Thirdly, towards the end of the study you will be asked for your opinion on how effective you think the project has been.

Why have I been invited to take part? You have been invited because you live in the area where the research project is taking place.

Do I have to take part?

No, participation is on a voluntary basis.

Can I withdraw from the project?

Yes, you can withdraw at any time simply by completing and returning to me the tear off slip at the bottom of the consent form attached. You would not be asked to explain your decision.

What will happen to any information I provide?

It will be stored in a securely locked place and only used by me specifically for this project. At no time will your name appear in reports produced.

What if I have further questions later? Please feel free to contact me by telephone or letter throughout the project - contact details are given below.

How will taking part in the project benefit me?

The project is designed to

be of real, practical benefit in helping young and older people to communicate better. I believe that you and other participants will benefit from an improvement in community spirit.

Who is behind this project? I am carrying out this research on behalf of Kings Lynn and West Norfolk Borough Council in partnership with Anglia Ruskin University. The project is being funded jointly by the Borough Council and European funding through Leader+.

Thank you for your time in considering whether or not to participate in this project.

Elaine Statham
Anglia Ruskin University
Webb Building
East Road
Cambridge CB1 1PT
Tel: 0845 196 2559

NAME OF PARTICIPANT:

Title of the project:



Main investigator and contact details: Elaine Statham
Anglia Ruskin University
Webb Building
East Road,
Cambridge, CB1 1PT
Tel: 0845 196 2559

Members of the research team: Woody Caan, Professor of Public Health
Stephen Moore, Reader in Social Policy

1. I agree to take part in the above research. I have read the Participant Information Sheet which is attached to this form. I understand what my role will be in this research, and all my questions have been answered to my satisfaction.
2. I understand that I am free to withdraw from the research at any time, for any reason and without prejudice.
3. I have been informed that the confidentiality of the information I provide will be safeguarded.
4. I am free to ask any questions at any time before and during the study.
5. I have been provided with a copy of this form and the Participant Information Sheet.

Data Protection: I agree to the University¹ processing personal data which I have supplied. I agree to the processing of such data for any purposes connected with the Research Project as outlined to me.

Name of participant (print).....Signed.....Date.....

PLEASE RETURN ONE COPY OF THIS FORM WITH THE COMPLETED QUESTIONNAIRE

If you wish to withdraw from the research at any time please sign the form below and return to the main investigator named above.

Title of Project: **Let's Talk**

I WISH TO WITHDRAW FROM THIS STUDY

Signed: _____ Date: _____

¹ "The University" includes ARU and its partner colleges

If you or someone you know has been affected by any of the issues we have discussed and wish to talk to someone, help is available at:

Crime Stoppers

- 0800 555111
- www.crimestoppers-uk.org

Victim Support

- 0845 30 30 900
- www.victimsupport.org.uk

Samaritans

- 08457 909090
- www.samaritans.org.uk

Location Profiles – quantitative data

As stated in Chapter 4, qualitative data through site visits, and quantitative data were collected relating to the profiles of the four locations to provide context for my research. The qualitative data were included in Chapter 5 to provide an overview of the locations. Here I expand on this by outlining the quantitative data that were available via the Office for National Statistics (ONS) and which were primarily drawn from the Census 2011, and the Indices of Deprivation 2010. As stated earlier, it is outside the scope of my research to undertake a detailed statistical analysis; however, a brief discussion of the quantitative data helps locate my research.

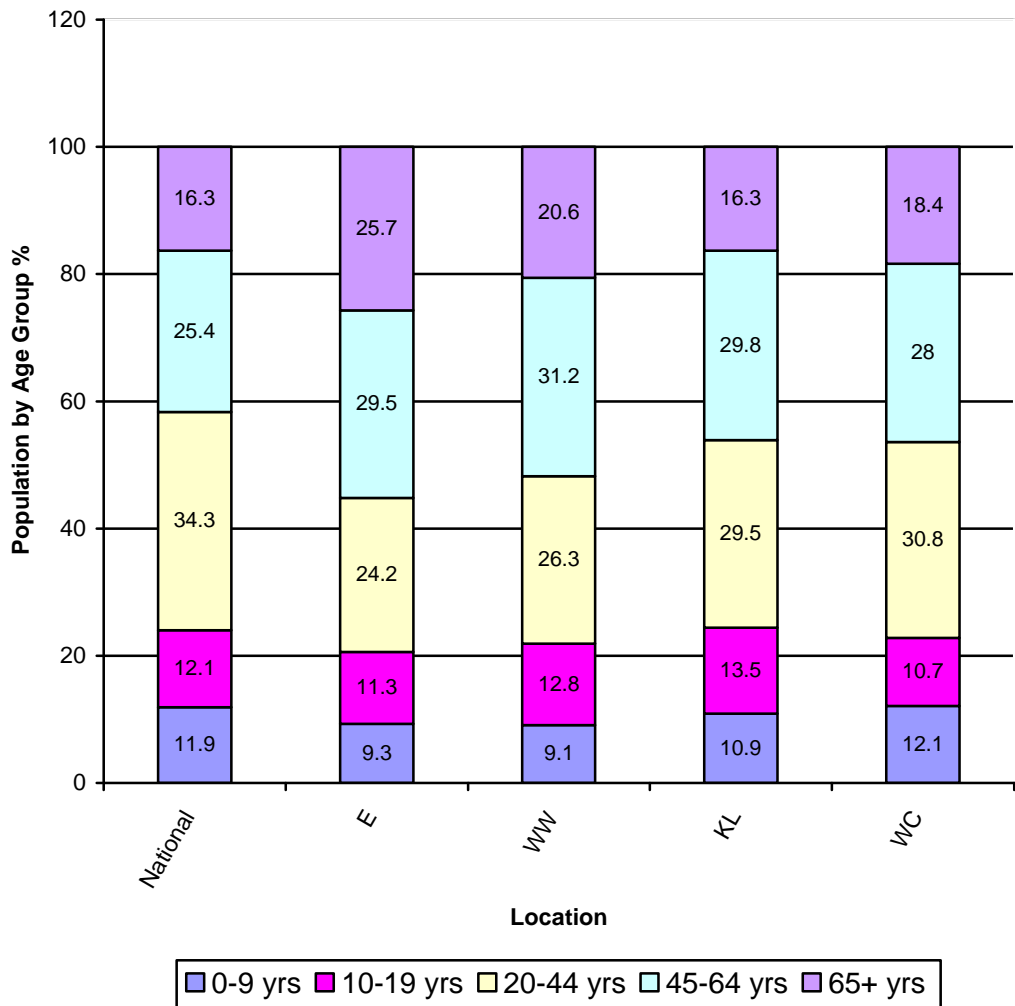
As is shown in Graph A1 below, all four locations are fairly close to the national percentage of the population in the 0-10 and 11-19 age groups, so there is no particular predominance of children and young teenagers. In Locations WC and KL the 20-44 age group is relatively close to the national figure, whereas for Locations E and WW the scores are some 8-10 percentage points lower. In the age group 45-64 all locations come out higher than the national score, the difference ranging between 2 and 6 percentage points.

At the top end of the age scale, Location KL matches the national percentage. Locations WW and WC are between 2 and 4 percentage points higher. Location E is 9 percentage points higher than the England picture.

In all locations the percentage of the population in age groups 45-64 and 65+ combined is higher than the national figure. The most noteworthy feature is the

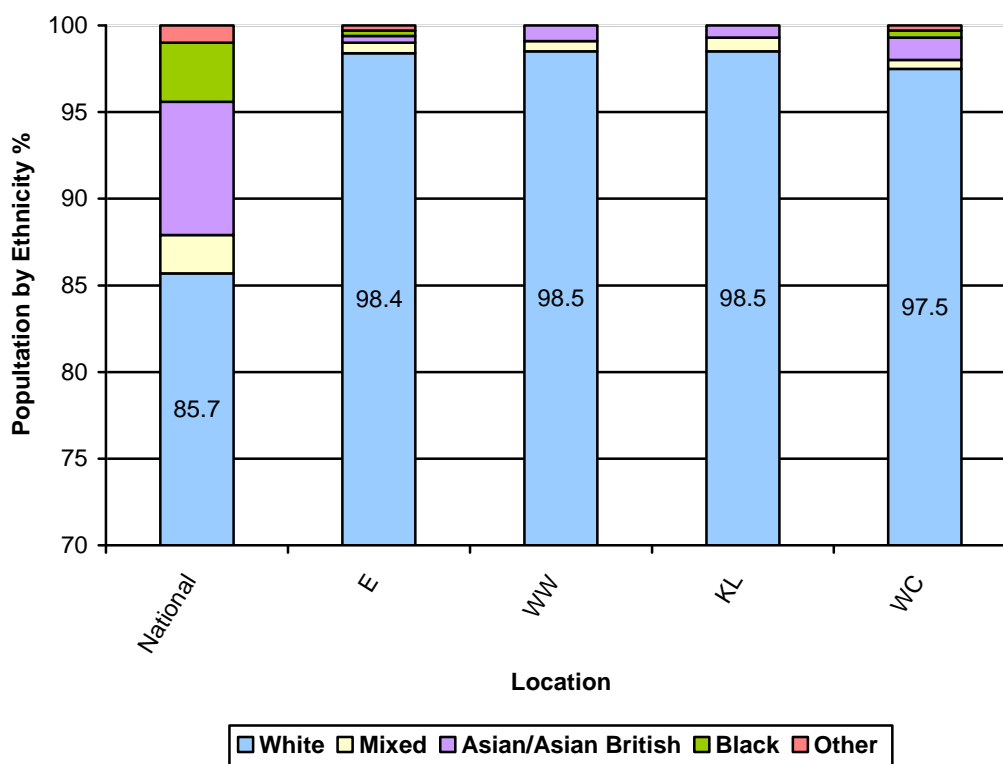
percentages in Locations E and WW are significantly higher than the national figure of 41.7%, standing at 55.2% and 51.8% respectively.

Graph A1: Profile of Research Locations by Age



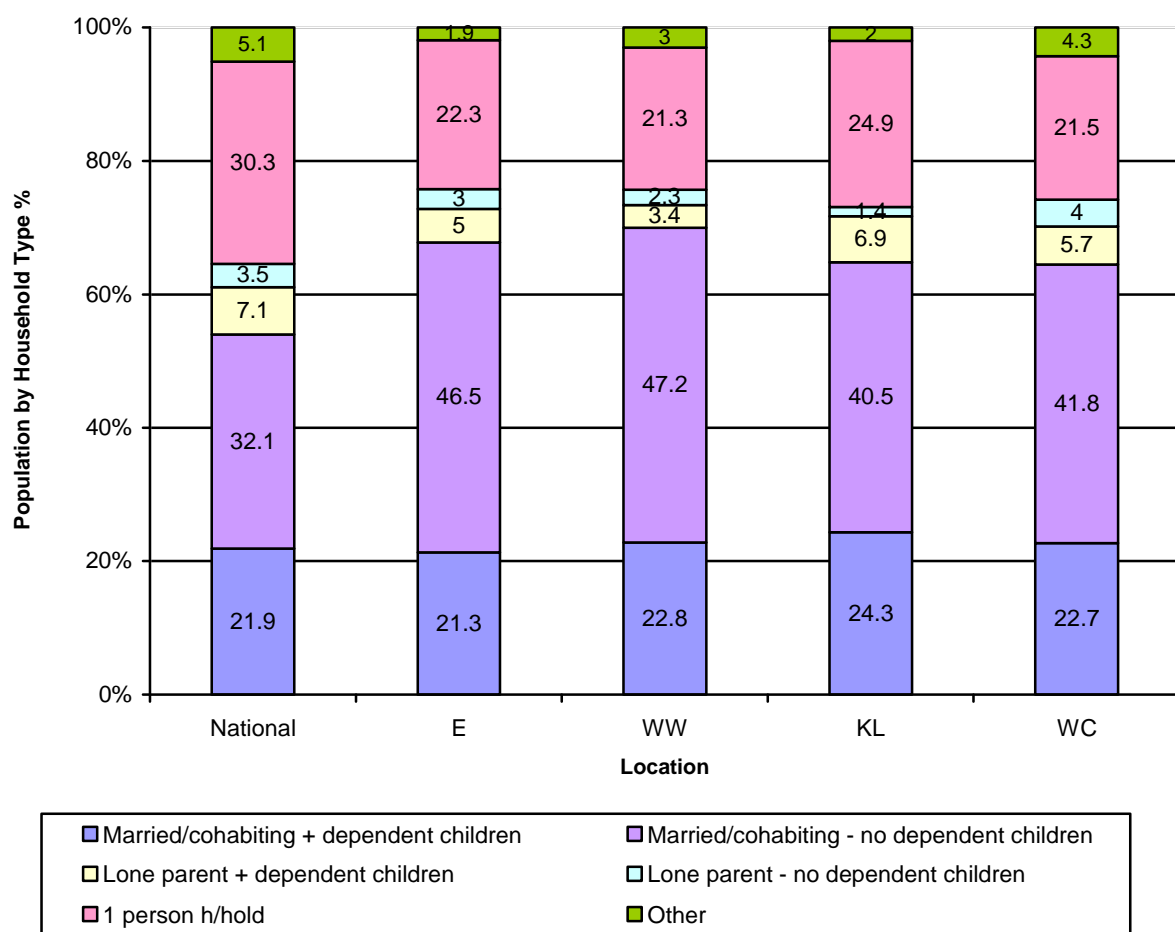
Graph A2 below shows that in all four locations the population is overwhelmingly white with only a very small percentage of residents coming from Mixed parentage of White/Black Caribbean, White/Asian or White/Other descent. Similarly, a very small percentage of residents were of Asian/Asian British descent in all locations; in only two of the locations does Black or Other descent feature but again the percentage is extremely low.

Graph A2: Profile of Research Locations by Ethnicity



In two of the three major categories of household shown in Graph A3 below, the four locations share a similar pattern of divergence from the England figures. All four locations are underweight in One person households by up to 5-9 percentage points. This divergent pattern is offset by all four locations being well above the national score – by up to 15 percentage points – in Married/Cohabiting with no dependent children. Three of the locations are slightly above the England percentage for Married/Cohabiting with dependent children; Location E is slightly lower. Location WC is close to the national figure for aggregated Lone Parents, with the other locations somewhat underweight by around 2-5 percentage points.

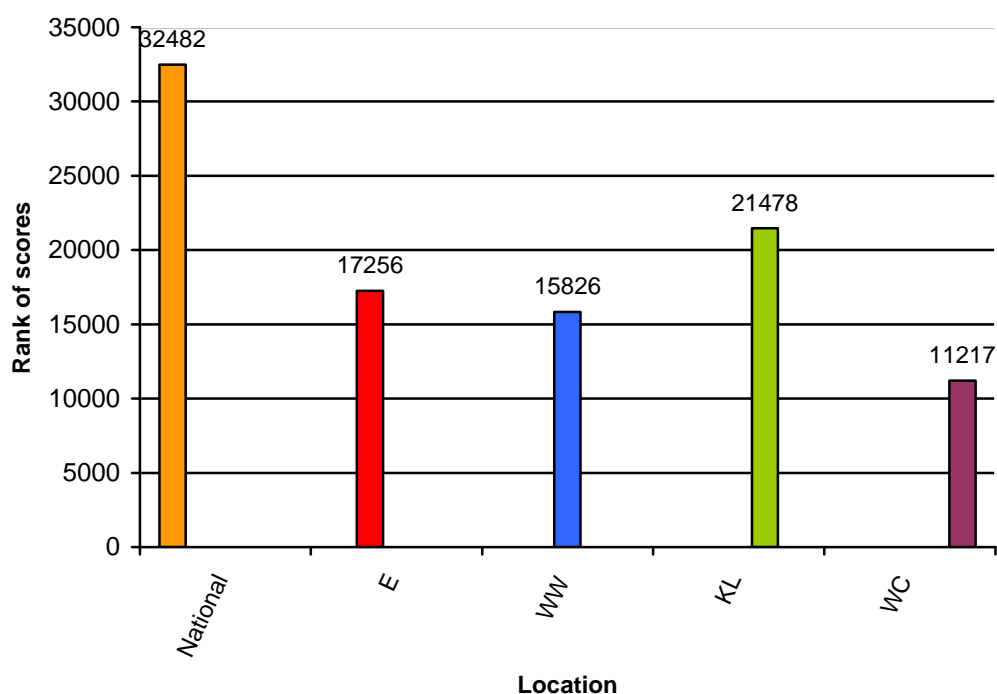
Graph A3: Profile of Research Locations by Household Type



To gauge the level of deprivation in different areas an Index of Multiple Deprivation (IMD) is used, the overall score for which represents the aggregated scores for seven social domains: income, employment, health deprivation/disability, education skills and training, barriers to housing/services, crime, and living environment. The ranking scores range from 1 to 32,482; 1 represents the highest level of deprivation, 32,482 the lowest level. Graph A4 below shows the ranking of the four research locations. Official statistical data are available at different levels – Country (England), Region, Unitary Authority, and local which is labelled Lower Level Super Output Area (LLSOA). Graphs

A4-8 below represent the LLSOA for the four research locations against the Country statistics to provide an insight into each location's IMD.

Graph A4: Index of Multiple Deprivation – all locations

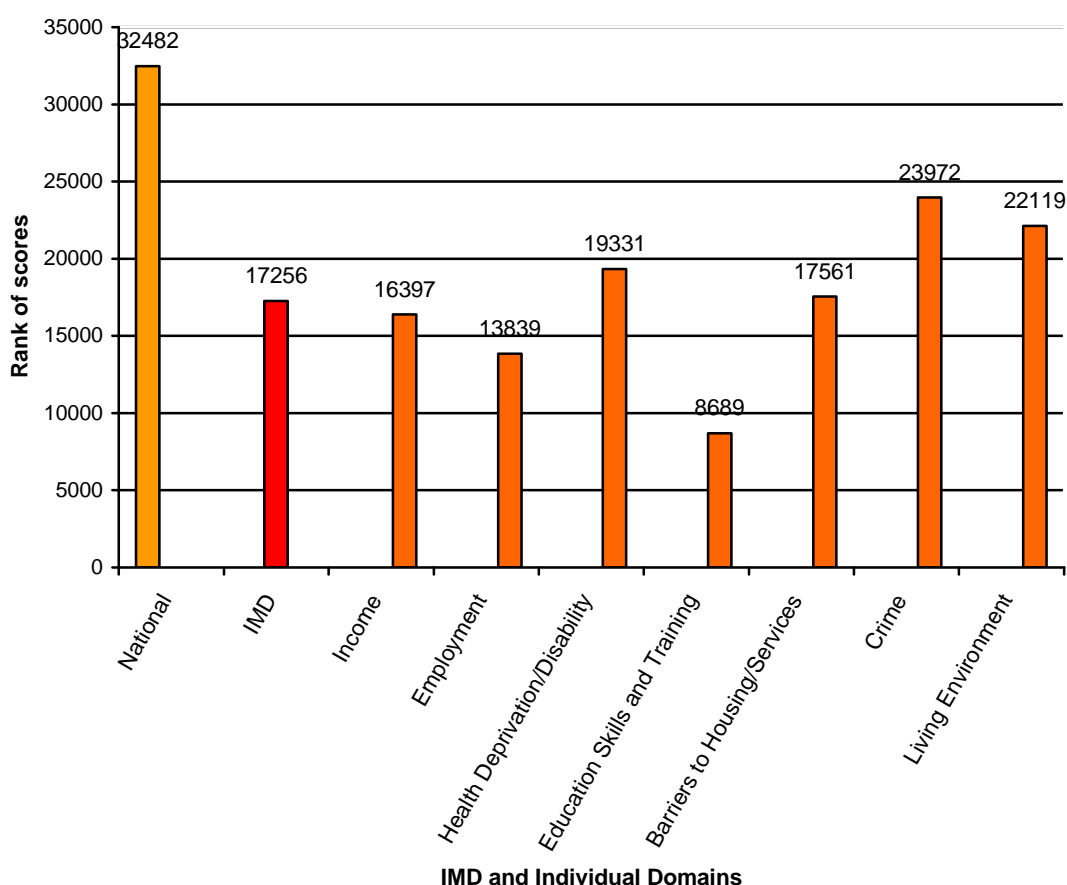


Graph A4 above shows the aggregate scores of the seven domains for each location against the National ranking scale. Of the total number of LLSOAs in England, Location WW falls within the lower end of the 5th decile whilst Locations E and KL sit within the 6th and 7th deciles respectively. Location WC has the highest level of multiple deprivation of the four in the 4th decile of the overall IMD ranking.

Graphs A5-8 provide a breakdown of the IMD, showing the seven domain scores for each of the locations in turn. I show the national ranking score on the

left of the graph, to the right of which is the location's overall IMD ranking followed by the individual social domains.

Graph A5: Index of Multiple Deprivation: Domain Indices – Location E



As Graph A5 shows, Location E sits within the mid-range of the IMD (6th decile) as do the two social domains of 'income' which relates to the levels of income support receipts, and 'barriers to housing/services'. What is particularly interesting is the poor ranking for 'education skills and training' which falls within the 3rd decile. The poor ranking for this domain suggests that for young people Key Stage 2, 3 and 4 test results are relatively poor, the proportion of them either staying on at school post 16 or progressing to higher education is low, and secondary school absence rates are relatively high. This ranking also

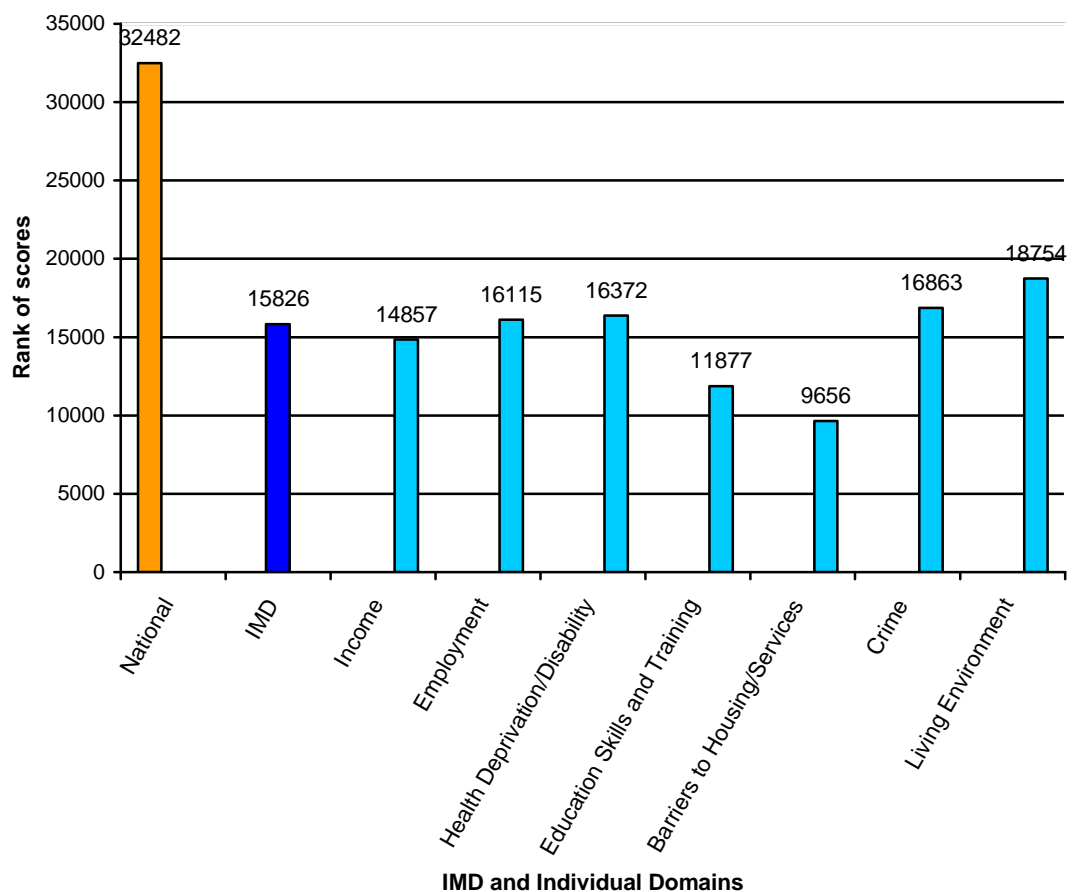
suggests the local adult population scores relatively poorly in terms of educational and professional qualifications.

The impact that the low ranking discussed above could have had on Location E's overall IMD ranking has been countered by the significantly better ranking for the domains of 'crime', 'health deprivation/disability', and 'living environment'. The former is within the 8th decile, indicating that the crime level (burglary, theft, criminal damage and violence) is relatively low. What, of course, this does not reveal is that anti-social behaviour has been an issue for some residents in the past, particularly in the vicinity of the village hall as outlined earlier.

Falling in the 7th decile the 'living environment' domain indicates that there is a relatively small number of houses, social and private, in poor condition. It also indicates that air quality is good and the village does not significantly suffer road traffic accidents.

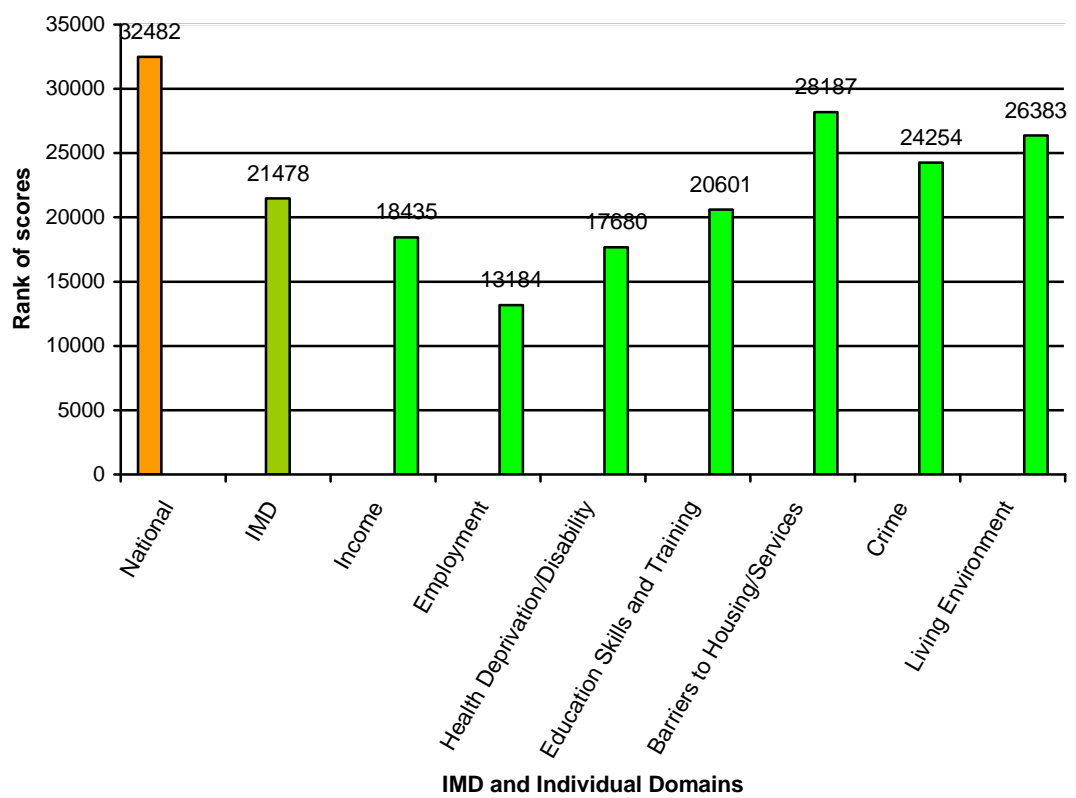
The 'health deprivation/disability' social domain relates to the incidence of premature deaths and the negative effect poor health has on quality of life (McLennan, et al, 2011). Attracting a score for this domain within the 7th decile suggests that relatively Location E residents enjoy good health and a lower than average premature death rate.

Graph A6: Index of Multiple Deprivation: Domain Indices – Location WW



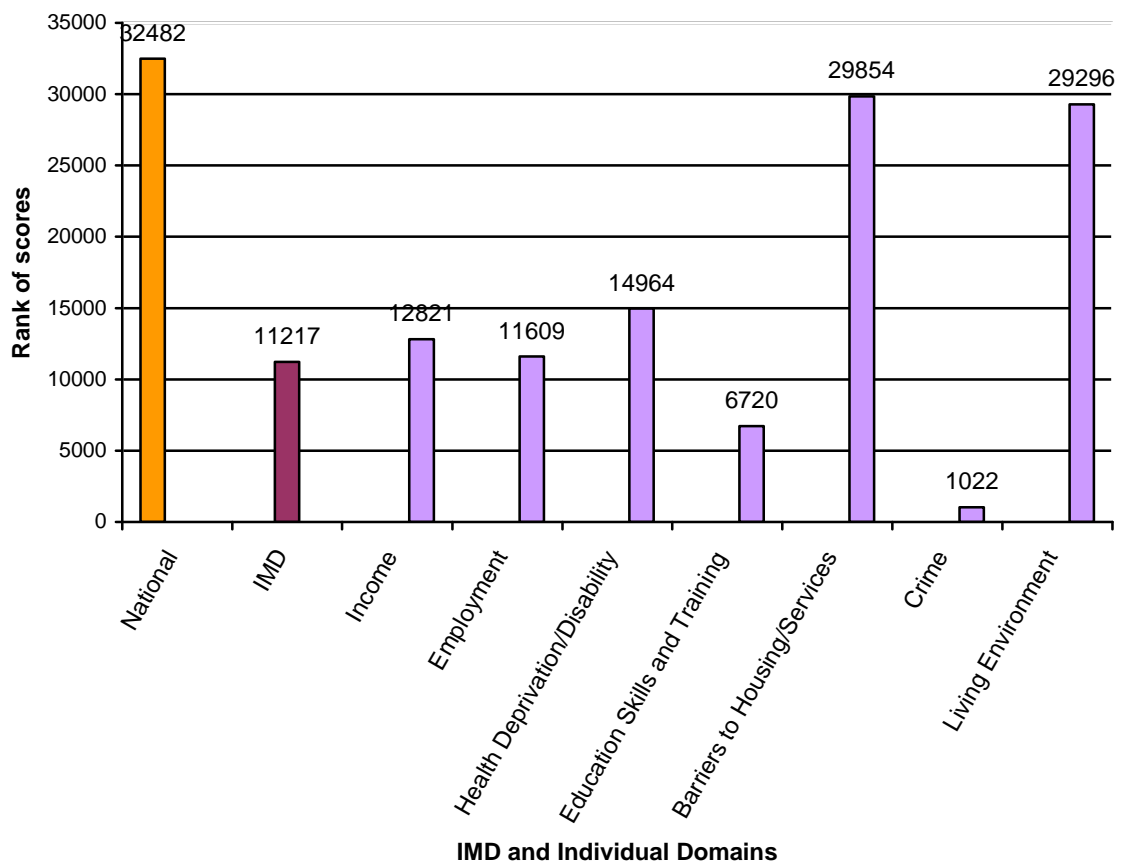
Location WW's IMD ranking falls within the 5th decile, as do the 'income' and 'employment' domain scores. The two domains which adversely affect the IMD score are 'education skills and training' and 'barriers to housing/services' being in the 4th and 5th deciles respectively. Location WW scores well in respect of 'living environment', although is ranked significantly lower than its neighbouring Location E. Graph A6 demonstrates that in all of the seven domains apart from 'Employment and 'education skills and training', Location WW's rankings indicate higher levels of deprivation than in Location E. The 'crime' domain differs significantly, with Location WW ranked in the 6th decile, whereas Location E sits in the 8th.

Graph A7: Index of Multiple Deprivation: Domain Indices – Location KL



Of the four, Location KL was ranked as the least deprived area, positioned in the 7th decile, with an actual ranking score of 21,478; compared with the second least deprived location (E) with a ranking score of 17,256. Its weakest domain score, coming in the 5th decile, is for 'employment'. In contrast it scores in the 9th decile for both 'barriers to housing/services' and 'living environment' which are better than in Locations E and WW. For the 'living environment' domain Location E sits within the 7th decile (22,119), Location WW in the 6th.

Graph A8: Index of Multiple Deprivation: Domain Indices – Location WC



According to the IMD rankings, Location WC is the most deprived of the four research locations. Ranked at 11,217 it sits within the 4th decile. While 'income' and 'employment' are ranked within the 4th decile, similar to the overall IMD score, 'health deprivation/disability' attracts a slight better score and comes within the 5th decile. Particularly striking is the poor ranking for 'crime'; this score coming within the 1st decile ranks significantly worse than any of the other locations where rankings included the 8th decile (Locations E and KL), and 6th decile (Location WW). In stark contrast to the 'crime' score, the rankings for 'barriers to housing/services' and 'living environment' came in the 10th decile with a score of 29,854 and 29,296 respectively. These extremes make the

individual domains the most divergent of the four locations from its overall IMD ranking score.